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Monthly Poetry and Prose Magazine

GloMag



Edited by Glory Sasikala

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ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag now brings out two hard copy versions per year, one in February and one in August. While there are no visual aids in the hard copy versions, the online version is enhanced by pictures accompanying the writings and the profiles. GloMag Online is the coming together of writers in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions, and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the writer gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the writer's intentions, and at the same time, enhance the reading experience.

Either way, GloMag remains euphoria, engaging all your senses at once. Perhaps you are sitting in solitude beneath a bough, besides a lake, and you turn the pages. Suddenly, a hundred voices are talking to you, capturing your thoughts. Time stands still, and you become engrossed, oblivious to anything but these beautiful writings, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

And when you come to, the world is still there, the lake is still there, the birds are chirping, shadows have lengthened. Nothing feels the same! You are not the same! You get up reluctantly. It's time to go home.

~ Glory Sasikala

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TAJIM

A young man in B S F dress

handling plastic dolls in a holiday noon.

A white plastic sheet he has

neatly spread on passers-by-path

and on it hundred dolls merrily dance.

The fat fly along the scented bay,

the poor, the patients, the domestic maids,

the ice cream boys wait and weigh and steal a piece

to shade their sheds. Stoutly built Tajim is fit

for a soldier's pay. Once he was a mason in Kolkata

but he left his job for his ailing maa at far away shack.

For some days he boils with brooms and brushes

now dolls keep him cool.

Abu Siddik: I am a writer residing in Berhampore, Murshidabad, India. I work as an Assistant Professor. I have contributed to various e-journals and anthologies. I have also published six books.

www.abusiddik.com

O SUN!

O heavenly Sun!

O trees and canopies!

Forthwith I infer it is

the vigor,

What I noted,

What I noted when I saw

the Sun rays fell on the trees

and canopies;

What I noted while I sat stagnantly

in my lawn,

And too, as I dwell,

What I noted;

What I noted when I saw the birds

soaring high;

They, soaring high under the sky,

aye, under the sky in pursuit of

mud,

twigs,
leaves, and feathers
to build their nests cup-shaped.

Adnan Shafi: I am a poet, writer, columnist, translator, ghazal writer, motivational speaker, blogger, and reviewer from Tral Kashmir (J and K). I have contributed my poems to various reputed magazines and journals. I have also published my poetry book “Tears Fall In My Heart”. Recently, I have been awarded by Gujarat Sahitya Academy for my poetry. Furthermore, I am the co-author of many international anthologies.

WHO ARE YOU AND WHO AM I?

Who are you and who am I?

Release me or deceive me

I cannot abide any longer

I want to be ashes, not aches.

I am desperate for reaching out

—to the bursts of the sunshine.

Be the Sun and water my grains,

as I will be your spring before spring.

Was it my fault to encounter you?

because of your beautiful eyes,

I started writing in my journal every day

because of your pleasing scent,

I began drawing in my imagination every dusk.

Who are you and who am I?

People will forbid me from eating

Although I will drink to think of you

People will allow me to pray for you

By then, I will be the sole guest at my burial.

My heart is not the stranger anymore,

Find the excuse to alleviate my tensions

Seduce me to your whispers and seize me

to your nightly advantages and kiss me.

Ahmad Al-Khatat: He was born in Baghdad, Iraq. His work has appeared in print and online journals globally, and he has poems translated into several languages. He has been nominated for Best of the Net, 2018. He is the author of *The Bleeding Heart Poet*, *Love On The War's Frontline*, *Gas Chamber*, *Wounds from Iraq*, *Roofs of Dreams*, *The Grey Revolution*, and *Noemi & Lips of Sweetness*. He lives in Montreal, Canada.

ONE MORE TIME

For Aunt Geneva Allen

I hold special affection for my Aunt
Geneva;
she showed me how to grow up civilly
so that bats from Hollywood belfries
wouldn't spray-paint my blood across
coal-laden fright cars, expressway
overpasses,
& contaminate my sense of self-respect.

For that, forever in my thoughts,
Geneva,
I seek you tonight below this snow
leopard
moon & implore you, beloved Aunt, to
rescue my soul once again from the
current
political event horizon that threatens me
& most of my neighbors.

Aunt Geneva, one more time is all I ask
of you.

Alan Britt: He has been nominated for the 2021 International Janus Pannonius Prize awarded by the Hungarian Centre of PEN International for excellence in poetry from any part of the world. Alan was interviewed at The Library of Congress for The Poet and the Poem. He has published 18 books of poetry and has served as Art Agent for the late great Ultra Violet while often reading poetry at her Chelsea, New York studio. A graduate of the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University, he currently teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.

MYSTICAL TOPAZ

A stone full of magic,
poetry and unexpected reflections.

At dawn, it discreetly steals the beauty of daylight,
illuminating the grayness with streaks of pale pink.
It has the freshness of the morning
and the innocence of a child's sleep.

At noon, it leads along a narrow path
to the Garden of Eden
—full of the richness of blue, lush green
and the scent of red flowers with petals
as passionate as the lips of a girl in love.

The stone sprinkles gold particles with each move.
It sparkles like a happy laugh full of larks
and it has the vigor of the droplets

carried by the waters of the stream.

In the evening, it takes on dark colors of melancholy.

Such jewels are the women—sorceresses,
who constantly wander between the earth and heaven.
They rise to the clouds to sing together with the angels
and fall to the ground to sell their soul to the devil
for a little love.

Alicja Maria Kuberska: I am a poet, novelist, writer, journalist, and editor residing in Poland, in Inowrocław. I work as a financial auditor. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published one novel and a few poetry volumes, both in English and Polish. My books were translated into many languages.

CINDERELLA GAME

Being promised the role of
Cinderella for the children's
play, I was denied of it that day.

As simple an occurrence of a
promise not kept and I crumpled
like a paper ball to heartily cry.

It settled in fast, I wasn't Cinderella
and she wasn't going to be me.
Not everyone needs to be her, certainly.

Nothing but a reference point since then
of all the ensuing heartbreaks, it is either
little more or way less than that pain.

At every threshold with hurt, to know
if I would crouch or make through it easy,
I play in my mind the Cinderella game.

Amanita Sen: Amanita has 2 collections of poems: ‘Candle In My Dream’ and ‘What I Don’t Tell You’. Her works have been published in numerous journals in India and abroad. She is a mental health professional and lives in Kolkata.

MANDEVILLA OF SECRET LOVE

Mandevilla of the tropics bask
on my sliver of a balcony—iron grill peeling
a secure hung jury placed well for my desire—
my favorite place. When I come home
hosts of red greet me petulant for my being tardy.

Not voluminous, they are star-like tender
velvet—their pert gaze infuses me joy
before sun shifts its embrace. If I could I would
cover my skin with trillion vermilion petals...
Mandevilla year-round dance each season
into full swing unabashed delicacy
with holy stories stirring my skins a-shimmer.

They blossom in me sentience smiling
even on solo full moon nights. Autonomous
they claim the stars. I make no excuses for

spirit of being as interwoven as I am
woman whose love endures undulating deserts
pendulous skies scorched Sundays—stirring
secret love—a crepuscular undoing.

Ambika Talwar: She is an India-born educator, healer-artist, author who bridges worlds with ecstatic poetry. Author of *4 Stars & 25 Roses* (for her father); *My Greece: Mirrors & Metamorphoses, a poetic-spiritual travelogue*, her poems appear in *Grateful Conversations*, *Beyond Words*, *Kyoto Journal*, *On Divine Names*, *Roseate Anthology*, *GloMag*, *Enchanting Verses*, *Quill&Parchment*, *Tower Journal*, and diverse anthologies—print/online. Pushcart nominee and Aatish 2 awardee, she won Best Original Story for a short film. Intuitive healing practitioner, she affirms “intricate power of language stirs us to poetry and holism.” Current CQ/CSPS board member, she lives in Los Angeles/New Delhi.

[*https://creativeinfinities.com/*](https://creativeinfinities.com/)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOl1DcYcEJ0&t=107s>

THE LIVES NEVER LIVED

Mr. Rahman, right like his father,

is a successful man.

His grandfather was, needless to say,

also a successful man.

They are all successful men—

both by the parameters

of their family and of the society.

The Rahman family has,

as it were, been synonymous with success.

The successful men are successfully

living their successful forefathers' lives.

Successfully.

Very successfully.

Aminool Islam: I am a poet residing in Bogra, Bangladesh. I work as an English language instructor. I have contributed to various anthologies. I am currently the sub-editor of a literary magazine named Neeharika.

UNTOUCHABLE TRUTH

Hathras girl bleeds
sap of life mingles
in meandering grooves
touches untouchable truth.

Victim of *jabardasti*
brazen barbarism
bared bruised battered
desecrated in Nature's alter
a gashed unvocal protest
resounds through
fissures and furrows of earth.

Hathras girl harvests
equity downtrodden
a jugglery of justice
in silence percolates

to the hollow of earth
in ashes consumed.

Still we rise
cast in one casteless gendered violence!

Hathras—A place in Uttar Pradesh, India

Jabardasti—Forcefully

Amita Ray: Amita Ray is former associate professor in English and Vice Principal of a college, residing in Kolkata, India. An academic of varied interests, she is a Translator, Short Story writer and Poet. She has two volumes in Translations of noted Bengali authors to her credit. She is presently a translator in several on-going projects. Her latest publication is a collection of short stories titled *TRAIL OF LOVE AND LONGINGS*. She has a passion for writing poems and has been widely published in various anthologies, journals and e-zines of national and international repute. She is an E.C. member of Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library, Kolkata.

Here is the history book

Where warriors and heroes

Become myth and martyr

Also the laughing canvass

Where eunuchs are painted with mockery

And their balls hung dry like

Dry fruits

Victor Ehikhamenor

and then the sun

swept a sea

and red horizons

fell

in the far depths

of a tenor

the swirling dervishes

at a bereft

mausoleum

chased the mind

to seas
skies
and the orbis
time plunged
from old trees
older forts
leaving a carpet
of brown
shades
and you once
suggested an
anarchic
revelation
your lips
shared just
a whisper
in blue

Amitabh Mitra: He is a poet, artist and a medical doctor based at East London, South Africa. His work, 'Images from Cecilia Makiwane', artwork from the township of Mdantsane, are on permanent display at the Medical School at Warwick, United Kingdom. *Mdantsane Breathing*, published in 2010, his coffee table book detailing in art and poetry, is dedicated to the brave people of Mdantsane. Amitabh believes in fusing Art, Poetry and Medicine for the ultimate healing. Some of his latest books are 'Stranger Than A Sun' and 'Anarchy And The Sea'.

THE DECEMBER SCHOLAR

I

Studied

Great philosophies

Heretical sciences

And

Differential Realities

I

Believed all

Whispered Heresies

I

Swept through

Psychosomatic Tomes

And

These Volumes of

Para-Psychology

I

Even spun an

Exponential Equation

On its axis

I

Searched All

And Everything

But in the End

This sweet bitter

End...

I

just could not

Understand

Me...

Amit Krishan Agnihotri: I am a poet residing in Landquart Switzerland. I work as a County Manager. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published short stories and poems in UK and India.

YEARNING

Sehnsucht

There was a hunger to hear the husky throaty sound of
French and Persian consonants

Wisps of hair blown across hazel eyes by winds scattering
magnolia petals

Some fat waxy ducks gobbling bread crumbs in St James
Park

And the clunky hooves of roan horses on pebbly pathways

How could the lake-studded foothills suffice?

The crooning of liquid laments was unequal to the task

The plums blossomed in vain, the cherries blanched

A disappointed Sun, sulking red, decided to retire

Thus days pass, and lifetimes

And still the orphaned yearning has no name

Love drowns penniless in hot sweet coffee

Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia: I am a retired civil servant, but at heart, a poet and teacher. I write, mostly poetry, in English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. I was awarded the NISSIM International Poetry Award (First Prize) 2019, and then, the Reuel International Award (First Prize) 2020 for Non-Fiction Prose by The Significant League, a well-known Creative Writing Group on Facebook. Recently, the Destiny International Community of Poets based out of Wakefield, England, UK, declared me Winner of their Poet of the Year 2020 as well as Critic of the Year 2020 recognitions.

Ocean am I
You, not shore
Lighthouse are we
Ship still wrecked
Ship of love
Drowned waves deep
Deep waves drowned
Love of ship
Wrecked still ship
We are lighthouse
Shore not, you
I am ocean

Ampat Koshy: Dr. Koshy AV has many books, degrees, diplomas, certificates, prizes, and awards to his credit, and also, besides teaching, is an editor, anthology maker, poet, critic and writer of fiction. He runs an autism NPO with his wife, Anna Gabriel. Two of his co-authored books published in 2020 were Amazon best-sellers in India and USA, namely, Wine-kissed Poems with Jagari Mukherjee and Vodka by the Volga with Santosh Bakaya.

THE EVENING

The evening creeps upon me, tendril by tendril
Till I'm devoured whole by a vineyard of shadowy
Aspirations, Wisteria droops into wistful
Raiment of half-light,
Glowing furry sable, ravenous night engulfs me.

Soaked in tendresse of morning's still memoirs,
Truth and hope course soft hollows of my chest
Sweet preserves of airy sunlit glades
Childhood's wooded castles in summer shade.
In my dreams, I know I can defeat the beast.
Make it through the fog and mist at least
In this embezzling darkness I carry true legacy,
Dawn's spark of delight, that makes its prophesy
Human heritage is to unfetter its shackles
To wing up and away above its sensory cage.
The only limitations are the ones we set ourselves.

There will be light and love.

And courage and hope always.

Amrita Valan: She is a mother of two boys and a writer based in Bangalore, India. She has a Master's degree in English literature. She has worked in the hospitality industry, BPOs, and as content creator for deductive logic and reasoning in English. Her poems and stories have been published in several anthologies, online journals and zines such as Café Dissensus, Café Lit, Spillwords, ImpSpired, Potato Soup Journal, Portland Metro zine, Poetry and Places, and Glomag.

AUTUMN AFTERNOON

Same sky spreads itself

over us

Same roads go through

minds

And that ridiculous shelter

of a tree when sudden rains

came, poured incessant

splashes on us

We're drenched to the core

in that autumn afternoon

Do you still remember the

tree, and the roadside on which

it stood alone, in the

grey afternoon?

Aneek Chatterjee: I am an author and academic from Kolkata, India. I got published in reputed literary magazines and poetry anthologies across the globe. I authored 14 books including three poetry collections and a novel. My third poetry collection titled “of Ashes and Persiflage” (New Delhi and Kolkata, Hawakal) came out in November, 2020. I have a Ph.D. in International Relations, and have been teaching in leading Indian and foreign universities. I was a Fulbright—Nehru Visiting faculty at the University of Virginia, USA and recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair to teach abroad. My poetry has been archived at Yale University.

FINDING YOU

I will find you

Wandering in my mind

Tucked in my rapturous heart.

Treasuring the memories of our love.

I will listen to you

In the changing tides

As I hear your echo

In the open expanse

As the winds rustle the leaves

I will hear our symphonies.

I will see you

In every sunrise

As it warms my heart

Dancing in the colors of dawn

Holding me as we watch the setting sun.

Dream with me
In the starry night
As the moon embraces you
Its beauty mesmerizing.
Wandering, as you meander
through the galaxy
Our love is beyond time and space.

Angela Chetty: Angela lives in Durban, South Africa. She is passionate about the arts and is an avid poet. Angela believes that words have the power to change the hearts and minds of people across the world. She has contributed to various international anthologies, journals and on- line publications. She has also published an anthology of poetry. Angela has been the recipient of several awards including, Top 100 poems.

IN THE RIVER OF LOVE

Here in the river of love

I am swimming alone

Waiting for you in the waves

Though much time is gone

Here in the dark night

Stars are reflected bright

I am waiting at the shore

To find you in the morning light

Here in the river of love

I find many a soul near me

Floating and screaming

From chain of love to get free

When the moon come up

I see your face there in it

I feel someday I will come
To you flying to that height

I will remain here for
Many many years and wait
To find your love and pray
Till I am shown the heaven's gate

Anil Kumar Panda (alias Tikku): He is from Brajrajnagar, Odisha, India, and resides there currently. He works as a mine surveyor in coal mines. He writes short stories and poems whenever he gets time.

KNIT IT RIGHT

Knit purl, knit purl, knit purl

Cast on predestined stitches

working away to my fated stretch

are my fingers, led by heartlight

prodded on by the mind-guide

drawing threads multihued, into motifs

Straight, delicate, intricate

Some convoluted utterly

Patterns that run undisturbed

only to be restyled suddenly

yet seamlessly

chasing a flawless fit

a perfect feel

A dropped stitch could tear it apart

Neglected if at all

a slip, a careless count

would knot the smooth fall

like a hump
on a highway
of options many
and a choice wrong
Yet undaunted, I weave on
Knit purl, knit purl, knit purl

Anju Kishore: A poet, editor and formerly a Cost Accountant, Anju Kishore's poems, some of them prize-winning, have been featured in numerous journals and anthologies. Her book of poems inspired by the civil war in Syria, '*...and I Stop to Listen*' earned her a glowing review in Kendriya Sahitya Akademi's English journal, *Indian Literature*. She has been part of the editorial teams of five anthologies with India Poetry Circle and Kavya-Adisakrit Publishing.

WONDERLAND

I sing a song beyond the sea
where feathers float on dreams
and cactus flowers bloom.

Where lazy afternoon hours
sneak glimpses at sunset.

Where time has no meaning
for it counts itself in breaths,
and clouds of many colors
drift just out of reach.

Where laughter fills the morning light
reflected off the dew,
and nighttime touches dusk,
to soothe a weary soul.

I walk among wishes
held deep within a sigh.

Where ferns cast lacy shadows
upon sparkling rippled lakes,

and enchantment rules the dawn.

I sing a song beyond the sea.

My song is heard and answered,

carried on an eagle's cry.

Published by Dreamstreets Magazine, June 2019

Ann Christine Tabaka: I am a poet and writer residing in Delaware, USA. I am a retired organic chemist and a retired personal trainer. I have 13 poetry books and have been published in numerous magazines and journals worldwide. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry. I was the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic), and I have won poetry awards from individual publications. **(a complete list of publications is available upon request)*

GREED

A nice inherent human trait

So far needs and conscience go hand in hand

A little loose grip over the reins

Topples loaded cart, loses the ground.

Bare needs frequently feed sweet breast

Desire more, more of desire flow through the veins

Full growth might yield cultured skills and lovable taste

Or a virulent virus gnawing deliver hazardous pains.

Seeds of fraudulence fed on toxins to surpass the rest

Deceptive dalliance sucks up slowly the mug of milk saved

Growing cry of corruption, treachery, increasingly heard of theft

Unperturbed craze unheeding taps the vitality depraved.

Though a force of evolution, growth, a garnishing gear

Ever hungry, thirsty, restless, braving for gaining height

Never having enough, it's my merit to deserve more

The more acquired, the more required, winning without genuine fight!

Antaryami Mishra: I am a bi-lingual poet writing both in Odia and English. I am working as a senior teacher in English at R.D.C. Higher Secondary School, Chilika Nuapada, Puri, Odisha. I am a published poet contributing to more than a dozen literary anthologies of national and international repute. I have a collection of Odia poems, 'Maa Nishaada'. My poem has found place in 'Signature of Truth', an anthology jointly published by literary forums: (1) Rhythm (2) India Poetry Forum (3) Worldwide Writers. Recently my winning Odia poem has been translated into English under 'Translation-Twirl' of POEMarium, a vibrant literary forum.

VASANTHI SWETHA

I think

art,

even when not shared,

is comforting,

because

once an art work is born,

the art immediately becomes the audience

along with the rest,

so at any given time,

there is minimum one person apart from you

consuming your work,

even if there is no one else watching/reading/listening to
your creation,

you must remember

that your art has a soul of its own

and there is no greater feedback

than your creation talking to you

through its own love language.

ANURAG K. MATHUR

Your art is different

It doesn't just become

The audience

It also becomes the creator

So at some points in time

You have your art

And the art that it begot

Talking to you about

Your original thought

Vasanthi Swetha: She is extremely passionate about the art of poetry, dance, reading and dreaming, and she believes that every poem that she writes is a result of a conversation with her soul.

Anurag Mathur: He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost two decades serving that industry. Whatever little time that has been spared from work or sleep or reflective meditation has—with quite a few well-meaning prods and nudges from friends—been devoted to occasionally tapping to the Muse's dictats from time to time.

COME SON, COME TO THE BALCONY

(Penned as a tribute to a Beautiful nation Spain and its cities like Barcelona and their Inspirational fight against Corona)

Come Son, Come quickly

Come to the Balcony

Our Heroes are Coming,

After Doing their national duty,

Together we will clap for them,

Our neighbors are also here

It's 8 'O' Clock again

It's a time for appreciation,

We are doing it for weeks now

for our dear nation Spain,

is suffering for weeks now.

We are Locked for our Safety

Since enemy is evident but unseen,

It's quite a different fight,

A never before situation
a never experienced experience
not a single arm or armament in use,
here clapping and appreciation is a beautiful excuse.

Mind me! Mind my Boy! It's Corona!
up against our spirited City
Our diehard, Indomitable and Legendary Barcelona!
Come Son, Come Quickly
Come to the Balcony
Our Heroes are Coming Back
After fighting this unknown attack!

Ashish K Pathak: He is a middle school teacher posted in Munger district of Bihar province. He has got a letter of appreciation from the President of India for his poem. He has been conferred WUP gold cross medal for his writing in the world book 'Complexion-based Discrimination'. He is one of six persons selected for featuring in the Marula World anthology. He is a regular contributor in Glomag.

SILENCE GROWS...

Silence grows into your eyes

An antique sky and this winter

The smell of wild fragrance surrounds

Remembering your footsteps on the

Wet cobblestone paths around

Memories never go away like butterflies

Your whisper, quite as the winter

A violin plays in the distance,

Memories pulled from the rubble

Turned into secret songs

The moonlight that never fades

Shared by lovers only

An ancient blue cave in the forgotten dreams

The silence whispered in the wintry wind

Silence grows all alone...

Asoke Kumar Mitra: He studied at Hindu school and St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, and is a retired journalist and was editor of 'Calcutta Canvas' and 'Indus Chronicle'. He is a bilingual poet. He has contributed to various anthologies published in India and abroad. His poems are translated into various languages. 'Savage Wind' is his first poetry book, a bilingual edition, translated into Spanish by Mexican poet Josep Juarez. 'Song Of Pebbles' is his second bilingual poetry book, which is translated into French. Poetry, photography, and painting are his passions.

WITH A FLAP THE WEE BIRDS HAVE FLOWN

Well it's taken me an age to see it -

That you kids aren't kids any more.

As I guess you'll know,

Your Dad's too slow

To see History repeats as before.

As the wise old-timers must have known,

Little gets big real quick

And with a flap the wee birds have flown

Be healthy, live long,

Be strong, be gentle,

And gentle, and strong

Go build me some grandkids,

Go sing them this song,

Tell 'em little gets big real quick

And with a flap the wee birds have flown

I'm spinning this yarn from the sunlight
That surfs the Sunny Coast waves,
Where we built a big castle
And I was your vassal,
Though I called you rascalion knaves.
So now, go build your own castles
That from little to big build quick,
Not slow how your Daddy behaves

Be healthy, live long,
Be strong, be gentle,
And gentle, and strong
Go build me some grandkids,
Go sing them this song,
Tell 'em little gets big real quick
And with a flap the wee birds have flown

Barry Pittard: I am a poet, lyricist and short story writer, living in the Hinterland of South East Queensland, Australia. I am a retired (refreshed!) teacher, and have also worked as an NGO among the socially marginalised. I have broadcast on social just and world music themes on community radio. In the theatre, I worked as an actor, director and writer. Presently, I am doing a personal dance sadhana, extensively using the superb music of Uma Mohan.

A WISH

I wish I was a royal

Living in a palace

Eating out of platters

Drinking out of a chalice

I wish I was a part

Of the family firm

Surrounded by security

With faces full and stern

I wish I was a royal

Dutiful abroad

Where governments welcome me

As duke or as lord

I wish I was a royal

Dressed in garment and in jewel

Coming from histories

Filled with armies dreadfully cruel

I wish I wasn't a royal

With hardly any room for privacy

I'd rather be a commoner

Who could carve out my own legacy

I'm glad I'm not a royal, I'm living life my own way

Without paparazzi following me everyday

Bevan Boggenpoel: His debut anthology, published in December 2016 was well received by the public and he sold 200 copies locally. He is also an author at a South African website known as Litnet (Literature Network in South Africa). His poetry is written in a South African context that covers different issues in daily life. In his writings, he strives to tell a story or teach a lesson that will inspire and motivate. He is currently a teacher at Bethelsdorp Road Primary in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth.

TINIEST DUST

I am not a winged bird
But I can fly
In the vastness of the universe
In the timelessness of the sky
Flapping my virtuous wings of the virtual
I write my name in visual
Appear they in white and black
Endless energy they tap
Energized with friends' positives
They become confluence of holy rivers
They are but part of boundless ocean
Of poetry, written from time immemorial
Drops of wisdom captured in varieties,
They are the light, water, dust and air
Oh! I take pride for
Being the tiniest
Of these tiny dusts.

Bharati Nayak: She is a bilingual poet, critic and translator from Bhubaneswar, India. Her poems have been published in more than hundred books, e-books and magazines of national and international repute. She has so far published eight books. She worked as the Editor for Radical Rhythm Volume-3. She was conferred the Sahitya Lahari Award by International Cosmos Society, India in 2018 and Star Ambassador of World Poetry And Art Philosophique Poetica International Award in Literature by the World Poetry Conference in Bhatinda in 2019.

FATHER’S DAY: JUNE 20, 2004

I watched my mother die over days:

Eyes sealed shut, glazed with a crust of time;

occasional sounds pantomiming

conversation; breathing barely there

and marked with wearied effort.

Hands sprout from two thin

and shriveled arms laying wherever placed; her legs,

scabbed from the falls

of her last conscious moments.

My father, the martial stoic, sits beside her,

leans into her, and whispers in her ear,

“It’s okay to go if you wish,” telling her, “I’m ready.”

In a half-century of life,

I had never seen such tenderness:

his age-mottled hands stroke shallow cheeks,

a half-finger brushes back brittle hair,

and while it took three days to complete—
on this Father's Day, my father inclined
to give my mother
the gift of dying.

Bill Cushing: He now lives in Glendale with his wife and their son. He recently retired after teaching college English for over 20 years. Published in various journals and anthologies—both in print and online, he is a multiple Pushcart Prize nominee and was named among the Top Ten L. A. Poets in 2017 as well as one of 2018's "ten poets to watch" by Spectrum Publishing of Los Angeles. Along with writing and facilitating a writing group (9 Bridges), his poetry book, *A Former Life*, was released and honored with a 2020 Kops-Featherling International Book Award. In 2019, he won the San Gabriel Valley Chapbook Competition with *Music Speaks*, a volume recently honored by the 2021 New York City Book Awards.

TONIGHT

The silver light shall bathe you clean of hate tonight,
Verily you shall witness a change in the trait tonight.

They desire you to fall prey to their tempting bait,
Be vigilant and patient, and carve your fate tonight.

Cries shall pierce the black clouds and reach the blazing sky,
No matter how they threaten, look into their eyes straight
tonight.

No one could forever, silence the voice of the masses,
Even the unborn foetus, for its right will debate tonight.

In the pervasive winds of Zabarwan your story shall echo
wide

Though from history, your name, they shall abrogate tonight.

The golden sun shall rise soon from the picturesque horizon,
To confront the stormy darkness, which it shall obliterate
tonight.

Truth shall shimmer crystal clear like the water of Jhelum,
Justice will befall and tyranny's hands, it will ablate tonight.

The supplications of innocents caged will rise to a
crescendo,
And the *Benevolent shall open the prison gate tonight.

The rivers may turn red, and trees shall bend, yet
The firmament will etch your name in its slate tonight.

When agony would abate, and fragrance of saffron spreads,
Under the swaying branches of chinar, your Ishq shall wait
tonight.

Don't regret, if you don't turn up to drink from her lip's
wine,

To quench your thirst, the spring of Kausar awaits tonight.

Benevolent—refers to God hence in Capital.

Kausar—a river or fountain in heaven.

Ishq—the name of the writer.

Bilquis Fatima: An innate lover of Nature and Speaker for social issues, she has expressed her feelings as short writes and speeches from her college days. Although a post-graduate in Chemistry, she has also mastered the skills of poetry appreciation and writing. Her poems reflecting the situations that are prevalent in the society have been appreciated in some groups of poets and writers lately.

LOOKING FOR YOU

Give me a space,
Somewhere in the street square
Where I can sit alone,
And feel your presence

Now I am in a tea stall
Sipping hot tea,
People are gossiping politics, economics
Life and laws

A road leads towards the jungle,
Where birds chirp
And the trees whistle,
Should I walk on this road
To feel you

My morning walk
Brings me many clouds,
White and brown, but,
An enormous sky
Keeps on looking at me,
And promises,
I can find you someday,
Somewhere

Bishnu Charan Parida: Bishnu Charan Parida is a bilingual poet from Jajpur Road of Odisha. Professionally an engineer though, he loves poetry. His poems are mainly on life, love, philosophy and Nature. His poems have been published in many anthologies and magazines of national and international repute. He has been awarded in the state level Kalinga Nagar book festival, Odisha in 2015, honored in the 11th Guntur International Poetry Festival, honored as a World Featured Poet 2019 of Pentasi-B, China. He also received the 8th R. N. Tagore award from X-press Publications, Kerala.

THE MONSTER OF LOCH NESS

dark and deep mysterious Loch Ness

what are the secrets you keep?

is the monster lurking there

ready to come from the deep

dark and deep is beautiful Loch Ness

a Castle from the ancient past

it provides safe haven for you

all your mystery for ever last

is she a dinosaur

from the past

or something more sinister

with evil intent

or is she a myth?

we want to believe

hoping one day

we'll be there to receive

dark and deep is dangerous Loch Ness

if one day she comes for you

just give the sign of the cross

she will respect what you do

or is the monster

deep in your head

and only shows

when the moon is full

Brian Mackenzie: I was born in Inverness and lived there until 1969. I moved to East Kilbride for a year and then to London, where I retired in 2009, except for a ten-year period when I lived in Saudi Arabia. I have worked most of my life in the Airline Industry, which enabled me to travel the world quite easily and cheaply. I am now retired and have lived in Spain for the last ten years. I only started writing since I retired in 2009, and in the last few years have assembled over four hundred poems/songs. My influences are really all the Rock poets, especially Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Ian Curtis, etc., and maybe a little Rabbin Burns.

CROSSROADS

She drove past a little later than usual.

Her languidity nibbled at the fatigue of a tiring day when stuck in a traffic jam near the traffic light that made no sense at that juncture at the junction.

The Moon was a complete circle whose slivery rays of silver silhouetted a rather morbid night.

Her own honeysuckle fragrance fading into a whirlpool of dollops, she looked around in frustration at those vehicles moving at tortoise's pace.

“What the hell is this traffic jam?” she vented to herself, her angst mere whispers across the four corners of her four-wheeler. She looked around, opening her windows, gazing through at motorists trying to peep and peek through between narrow gaps, one with a wife carrying a baby at the back.

“Endangering their lives!” she lamented unveiling her own anguish.

Across the pavements, a dozen people were walking, clothes tattered, carrying bags like bundles of pillows, seeking shelter, two young children among them, and emaciated, dried phlegm from their noses, trying to match and catch the steps of adults.

An array of appalling thoughts sprung past her like a quick reverie; her windows opened her to a new world, a dawn of thousand thoughts flashed, her infinite dreams faded into her own shadows of complacency.

“Pom Pom!” a car honked behind her. She came back from the quick whirlpool of thoughts that taught her contentment.

Reality jolted her.

Brindha Vinodh: She is a postgraduate in Econometrics but a writer within. She has contributed to several anthologies and has been a featured poet in ‘year of the poet’ by InnerChildPress International, USA, and her roseate sonnet was selected as one of the best poems of 2020 by the same team.

WHEN THOU SMILE

(1)

My search for words worthy of thy grace

Proves futile day after day

The whole lexicon runs out

Wishing to write a song in thy praise

I sat in utter silence for long

Then springs forth a moment

Silence turns into prayer.

(2)

I wish to play the notes on the flute

That can steal thy heart

No such melodies come forth

With eyes closed I sat wrapped up

At thy lotus feet

Waiting and waiting for inspiration

Then heartbeats turn into music.

(3)

The spring breaks out into myriad blossoms

The air is perfumed with roses, *harsingars*...

I pick a handful of flowers

To offer thee

As thou smile

Fragrance fills the whole place

Including my empty room.

B.S.Tyagi: He comes from India. He writes in both Hindi and English. He has several books—fiction and non-fiction to his credit. His poems have been included in several anthologies. He writes short stories, which regularly appear in national and international literary magazines. His write-ups and poems have appeared in national and international magazines. Besides, he has translated four books of poems. He shies away from public celebrations and prizes. Inner bliss he is showered upon through creativity is the greatest prize.

ABIDING

Waiting for your

Resurrection

In the damaged

Allegory of utopia.

Hope rejuvenates

The anamnesis of

Memories stored

In another past.

Anxiety orbits

Amidst the constellations

Aching to return

To the ordinary world.

Carl Scharwath: He has appeared globally with 170-plus journals selecting his poetry, short stories, interviews, essays, plays or art. Three poetry books—Journey To Become Forgotten, Abandoned, and Lake County Poets Anthology have been published. His first photography book was published by Praxis. Carl is the art editor for both Minute Magazine (USA) and A Too Powerful Word (Serbia), and is a competitive runner and a 2nd degree black-belt in Taekwondo.

Oh this fire
the matchstick
flames
tongues
teased by winds
how they dance
this way and that
rise high and higher
as if to touch the sky
you end up holding the ashes.
only the ashes.

Chandramohan Naidu: He is a retired bank employee and now a freelance writer and photographer based in Chennai. He is part of the poetry circle that meets first Wednesday of every month. He writes poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.

ALARIC SEIZES ROME

All we wanted was to have our own home.
We've earned that well with all the blood we've paid
To serve ungrateful condescending Rome
Against this city such a siege I've laid
That shall not be forgotten. Scribes shall scratch
Down this day in their Latin symbols.
Today we enter, no mortal can snatch
Mothers shall tell as they wield their thimbles
How the Visigoths won the world city
If they'd allowed us some far province
To rest our wanderings, shown us pity
We have fought their battles for far long since,
Paid with contempt. Their distant emperor
Dotes on his chickens, will not be a man
Upon my warriors his scorn would pour
Whose boots he's not fit to lick, no one can

Stop us now, we'll allow church refugees

A few days looting only, how they'll sigh

Who thought us their barbarian stooges

By German swords the pride of Rome must die.

Christopher Villiers: I am a poet residing in Branton, England. I work as a writer. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published three volumes of poetry.

CIRCLES

There are stories in my circles
as the world goes round and round
each ring a year of memories
a song without a sound
run your fingers across the ages
read through my ancient pages
now that i'm gone

I was born here on this mountain
some hundred years ago
the sunlight and the rainfall
taught me all i know
how i loved the dancing flowers
the quiet midnight hours
where have they gone?

Now my story has found an ending
the axe has laid me down
the artwork of my lifetime
is stretched out on the ground
the mountain wraps herself around me
the flowers all surround me
and life goes on

Dale Adams: I am a poet and musician residing in Oklahoma, USA. I work in an auto dealership. I have been writing poems and composing songs since 2011. I have my own SoundCloud Channel where many of my songs and poems can be heard. I have converted other poets work into songs for them. My work has appeared in several anthologies.

WARM/HUNGER

We realize the No-Man
No-Woman land
Between Warm/Hunger.
It's actually the No-thing
That held us in bond
Without a concrete tense
Straddling the precipice
Between Life & Death
As a valid chasm.
Warm & Hunger are
On the same plane
As receiving blanket
In one hand
A basket and shovel
In the other
Seemed together

As ephemeral ghosts

In our miserable

Existence.

Daniel de Culla: I am a poet, writer, etc., residing in Burgos, Spain. I am retired. I have also published more than seventy poetry anthologies.

PASSENGERS

Educated, moneyed, light-skinned, haughty, honorary whites,

Non-indentured.

Some were arrogant, sly, devious traders.

Many played their non-white role inside the imperial shackles.

Adept at parting the dark indentured and the indigenous from their sweated funds,

They flaunted their ill-gotten wealth

And trampled the workers in the dust.

Cold condescending collaborators,

They cleverly played the colonial game,

They fought to fill the imperial puppet organisations, the spy networks.

They fought for promotion as they promoted Apartheid curricula, Apartheid journalism, the Apartheid agenda.

They said that the Apartheid special branch had ‘hearts of gold’,

They aped the way the herrenvolk embarrassed, humiliated and bullied the melanin-enriched.

Rejected as non-whites,

The fair ones,

The Uncle Toms,

Still slobbered after the crumbs from the imperial table even as some of them decried racial discrimination.

Once Mandela was released, the ‘passengers’ turned their coats.

They joined the ANC and were more radical than the ANC.

They grew even more wealthy.

You see they are not workers.

They use their brains, not their hands.

Virally, they steal the people's dignity, their lives, their homes, their families.

They are passengers.

Deena Padayachee: He is a South African Author and Poet, residing in Durban. He works as a Primary Care physician. His writings have been included in various international and South African anthologies, including the Readers' Digest's BEST SOUTH AFRICAN SHORT STORIES. Three of his books have been published. The English academy of Southern Africa awarded the author the Olive Schreiner Prize for prose; The Congress of South African Writers has awarded the doctor the Nadine Gordimer Prize for prose.

THE LONELY TAVERN

With a lantern in my hand, I stand by the roadside

And look at the passersby

Sometimes raising the lantern, to see their faces well

If anyone, just about anyone, looks at my face

And enters into my tavern, old and ramshackle

With the wall papers falling off

Rickety tables and chairs, placed around a samovar in the middle

The only source of warmth, in the otherwise cold and dead ambience

I put on a makeup, for the show every night

A red lipstick, and a dash of red blush on my cheeks

With a red velvet dress, to drape my wrinkly body

I wait for someone to come by

Drink vintage wine and make love to me

Love me madly, just like the olden days

I raise the lantern standing by the roadside

“Ahoy! Sailor, would you like to come in”

Nights go by, I look at the mirror on the kitchen wall
Couldn't someone just come in
Couldn't someone just make love to the real me
Was it always about my young svelte body
I sat alone by the samovar, late in the night
But no one knocks on the door, no one ever comes in.

Dipankar Sarkar: I am only a part-time poet residing in Kolkata, India. I work as the CEO of Mongia Green Foundation. Poetry is the only soulmate I have. I find solace in poetry when my heart bleeds. Poetry comes to me completely unannounced, without a notice. I wake up sometimes, out of an altered reality or out of a daydream, and voila, words just start flowing out of nowhere and completely inundate me, forcing me to live an experience of writing.

WHAT IS LEFT OF US?

(We all fail every day)

Humanity tossed shaken questioned displaced disturbed
challenged shocked surprised

saddened deleted infected rejected overruled dismissed
disputed hunted battered hated

scattered twisted mistaken underestimated ignored forlorn
usurped dominated

controlled disappointed insulted exposed ruled renewed
rationed redirected caged

cautioned confused punished avoided annihilated animated
silenced invaded halted

hated fading fighting trying bleeding trafficked mistreated
vaccinated kidnapped scorned

scorched unseen affected neglected nauseated recolonised
despised disenfranchised

desensitised wavering congregating screeching reacting
expanding revolving searching

silencing hunting hunted healing hating kneeling
sympathising seeking screeching

feuding hurting lamenting circulating questioning suffering
suffocating migrating angered

fractured cornered reversing affected neglected despised
reversing surging morphing

raging intoxicated lost yearning transforming dreaming
cursing fleeing indoctrinated

sighing marching panicking fleeing worrying hiding
preaching chanting waking stumbling

removing calculating contemplating seeking questioning
creating pioneering circulating

mimicking mirroring mending meandering moving
murmuring murdering

musing revolting sighing panicking shedding crumbling –

But what is left of us if we fail every single new day?

Don Beukes: He is a South African, British and EU writer. He is the author of ‘The Salamander Chronicles’, ‘Icarus Rising-Volume 1’ (ABP), an ekphrastic collection and ‘Sic Transit Gloria Mundi’. He was a teacher in both South Africa and the UK. His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into several languages. He was nominated for the ‘Best of the Net’ as well as the Pushcart Poetry Prize (USA). He was published in his first SA Anthology ‘In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection’ in 2018 and his second ‘Cape Sounds’ in 2019.

DESTINIES SHIFT

Like a detective or salesman after a lead,
a jealous extra hungry for of the first lead role,
my destinies shift between control and rolled dice.

Knowing the sea will be not forever ice free
along my chosen route, do I want to free boot
or aspire to engage as a cruise ship boot black
and watch the unsettled play their slots and black jack
in quest of their elusive holy grail jack pot
while jaded doves adrenalize in the spot light?

The isolated, stark figure of the light house
confronts the image of the soft-bobbing house boat
like a cradle rocking itself in its boat slip

moored oh so serenely by its careful slip knot
which is not (not!) a noose. It's a kind of knot ring.

O, to be barefoot beach boy, heedless of ring worm.

Duane Vorhees: He grew up in rural Ohio, fell in love, went to school, fell in love, stuck his toe on bits of four continents, fell in love, taught and learned various subjects, fell in love, grew chronologically and physically. Fell in love, fell in love fell in love. 'Love's Autobiography' is the first part of a longer meditation, 'The Many Loves of Duane Vorhees'. It is based on a lifetime of observation, imagination, introspection, experience, and fantasy.

ANOTHER MORNING

It is unknown at this time

How many of those words

have a heavy summation of

those words forever or ever?

Of course,

wise linguists will say!

Is this an invisible conspiracy under the cover of disguise?

The answer to this question is that there is no such thing as a horrible tragedy

That has never been heard before.

This deadly form has disappeared again in a few months.

The world has lost its ability to block the world.

The country is on the alert.

Let's build our own health fortune now.

We have to learn to live a normal sattvic life

No matter how much discipline-information this man goes through

The timeless ruthlessness of the morning is dark in the morning,

What is the morning after the night?

Dear friends!

Throwing pride away is far more cautious,

Even more refreshingly introverted, Who is behind and who is in front, Who is big and who is small and powerful all over the world,

Who is or is not, is the one

Who is free from the trap of all these unwanted questions.

Another morning is the music of humanity

Dusmanta Choudhury: He is a poet residing in Jeypore, in the district of Koraput, Odisha, India. He is a Lecturer in English in Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Jr. College, Lamtaput in Koraput district in the Department of Higher Education Government of Odisha. He has contributed to various anthologies. He has recently got the Pentasi B World Featured Poet 2020 Honour. He is also a member of several poetry societies. He has also published many Odia and English poems.

STAGE

Translated by Ula de B

Once he stood up on top of the stage
he understood
that there are things,
which cannot be built up.
Paralyzed with stage-fright,
he lost his might.

Even though it's not his own words
were to carry him
into the world of magic,
it was hard for him to prove
that he's a man-eater
and can play someone, who he is not.

He decided
to live far away from her,
without criticism and failures.

He didn't think then,
that such a person can be found
in front of whom without pretending
you seize to exist.

Eliza Segiet: Her poems Questions and Sea of Mists won the title of the International Publication of the Year 2017 and 2018 in Spillwords Press. She was nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019 and for the iWoman Global Awards. She won the Laureate Naji Naaman Literary Prize 2020, the Laureate International Award Paragon of Hope (2020), and the Laureate World Award 2020 'Cesar Vallejo' for Literary Excellence. Her works can be found in anthologies and literary magazines worldwide.

BEGAT

The painter, contentious.

The poet, broken.

Taking images.

Decayed dozing in the drizzle.

Swallowed by a madman,

his pages slip apart.

Word's swimming, volatile.

Belief in the vibrations of his head,
synthetic.

Norms constructed by formulating,
youthful.

Pearls, elegant stubbles
at a dartboard.

Thoughts, begat thought.

Thought begat thoughts.

Ferris E Jones: He writes poetry and screenplays from his residence in Puyallup, Washington. His work has been published in *Se La Vie Writers Journal*, *Write on Magazine*, *Outlaw Poetry*, *Degenerate Literature 17*, *Tuck Magazine*, *The Literary Hatchet*, *Warriors with Wings* and other literary periodicals. He is the recipient of two Grants from the Nevada Arts Council and published several collections of poetry, including *To Burning Man*, *Oh the Path that Followed* and *As the Toad Sleeps*. You can learn more about Ferris E. Jones by visiting www.inquisitionpoetry.com where each month he features the work of other poets.

from the old wound
words ooze out
masquerading as poetry
all and sundry tell her to treat it
she says that it is a crime to stop poetry

it festers
eating her up
from skin
to bone
the words still ooze
poetry of sorts

spraying perfume on the rot
she goes on
covering the wound sometimes
and at times

not covering

to let out poetry

words change colours

the infection spreads

her wound becomes theirs

the world is filled with reds

it is a crime to stop poetry

Gauri Dixit: When not busy working in her office, she is busy being a traveller, climbing mountains, walking on untrodden paths, capturing the voice of a solitary flower blossoming from a rock or the bird sitting on a hanging branch, sometimes the setting sun or the sea in her camera as well as in the words she weaves. That she has been a part of many anthologies as well as a Reuel Prize awardee and had commendable mention at Destiny's Poet is incidental. In her first book, 'In My Skin, I Find Freedom', there are poems on varied subjects, yet there is a common thread of a skeptical questioning mind of a free woman.

LONGING

The darkness in me that you see

Is nothing but a heap of gloomy dust

Nestled in the corners of heart for ages

Uncover the shroud and find me out

Listen deeply what I am longing to say when you are around

Let me be a cloud and sail in your sky

Make me smile whenever I lose charm

Sit beside and talk to me under a star studded sky

Hold my hand and hum a tune

Without a care about the right notes

Behold me and let me fall on you like droplets of rain

Because darkness also holds hope

It is the clouds dark that always cause rain

I water you...you water me

Let's make a rainbow with this sweet little pain

Gayatree G Lahon: Gayatree is a poet and a teacher from Assam. For her, poetry is a passion where she finds peace and solace amidst the complexities of life. Being an aesthete, she finds beauty in every object of life and nature and her ink pours those elements in a subtle way. Her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies and web magazines.

Every summer,
the river dries up
exposing veins
here and there.

The slender stream,
the remains of the bed,
cool, flows gently
among rocks, gurgling.

Every Summer
a group of women
weave dreams of gold
squatting on the sand
fishing lazily.

Hope arrives
thirsting for rains
to brim again

bursting boundaries

once again

every summer.

Geeta Varma: She is a poet based in Chennai, India. She has contributed to numerous anthologies. She has also published two books. She has been a teacher for thirty years and a freelance journalist. She is now an Educational Consultant and writes for Deccan Herald. She enjoys working with children and has conducted many creative workshops. Her interests include music, reading, writing (poems and stories for children) and travelling.

FROZEN HORSE

Time is a frozen horse,
Gallop on imaginary glaciers,
Breaking into a thousand shards,
Gathering dreams on piercing prisms,

Hooves dripping icicles of wounds in the summer heat,
Where nothing melts, not even hearts.

Its mane wanting to morph into wings that slice frosty
winds,

Till this horse realises that Pegasus is a myth of the mind,

Where flakes swim around in patterns that repeat the same
thought,

In waters that stopped thawing for fear of losing themselves,

And reins are self-made paradigms,

Reiterating that time is a frozen horse.

Geethanjali Dilip: Geethanjali takes her name seriously and evolves as a handful of songs. A French teacher by profession she contributes to several ezines and blogs. She is a recipient of The Reuel International award for Poetry 2017 and also the meritorious award for commendable mention in Great Indian Poetry Contest 2018. Residing at Salem, India, Geeth believes that poetry connects and moves the world.

PIGEON TALK

GLORY TO PIGEON

Greedy Pigeon!

Don't fight with your wife!

Give her some rice

You've chased away the sparrows

Why's your outlook so narrow?

Learn charity and kindness

Don't act like Royal Highness

And you'd better meditate

Your stress levels aren't great

Your eyes are so red

It's time you went to bed

PIGEON TO GLORY

Kurrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!!!

Glory Sasikala: She is a writer, publisher, and poet currently residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is the Editor and Publisher of GloMag, an international poetry and prose magazine. Her poetry books, novels, and short stories are available in various online bookstores such as Amazon and Flipkart as well as on her blogs. She is on the brink of publishing a very interesting collection of anecdotes and short stories inspired by her rather colourful and chequered life.

AFTERMATH

“the elephant in the living room”,

i am the elephant in the living room

everybody turns a blind eye to

as though i did not exist

to be more precise my problem did not exist

they would all say we did not know it was an elephant

we thought it was part of the furniture

“tremors”

an earthquake in my brain

all shattered and scattered inside

“solitude”

finding an escape

in grape juice

turned into wine

“nightmares”

ghostly dreams my bed fellows

ghost!!

with skulls for heads

they have no eyes

but they see me

“the morning after “

head aching and spinning

after effects

blurs the landscape of life

“coffee”

cups and cups

the hangover won't go away

“work”

drag my tired body

to the train station

lazing at home is not an option

“money”

does not grow on trees

work seven to five

to keep the home fires burning

“life”

that’s life

eat, drink, sleep, defecate and work

that’s life

Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny: He is an Indian born and brought up in South Africa. He has been fascinated by, and writing poetry since his early boyhood. He has performed his poetry at various forums, including the Poetry Africa Festival, the Mauritian Writers' Association, and Glorioustimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.

OPEN WINDOW

It's not so much that seabirds follow us
more like they lead the way, going on ahead
like willing guides with not one word of our language.

Let it not manifest—red roses, ultraviolet
and the radiant nothingness.
a few yards into the future.

We love them for this,
for presaging it out, for showing us where the edge
of the present moment is.

Alphabet can speak its own tongue
it will be all symbol surely;
suffering each invisible star.

Lean out our open window, listen:

the child is laughing now, the smell of earth is strong

in the lawn, a solitary bird slowly losing his voice.

Gopal Lahiri: He is a Kolkata-based bilingual poet, critic, editor and translator with 22 books published mostly (14) in English and a few (8) in Bengali, including four jointly edited books. His poetry is also published across various anthologies as well as in journals of India and abroad. His poems are translated into 14 languages. He is the recipient of the Poet of the Year Award in *Destiny Poets*, UK, 2016, *Setu* Excellence Award, 2020, Pittsburgh, US, Lifetime Achievement Award, Indology, West Bengal, 2020.

FALGUN

DRY LEAFS

Dry leafs
Are resurfacing
Being more alive
than the green ones

TREES

The bare trees
Are singing melodious songs in air
Hearing the songs
The nature is pleased with herself

DESERTS

In deserts
The air is playing sandy holi
The sky is unseen
Under a dusty veil

Guna Moran: He is an Assamese Poet and Critic. His poems are published in more than hundred international magazines, journals, webzines, blogs, newspapers and anthologies, and have been translated into thirty languages around the world. He has three poetry books to his credit. He lives in Assam, India.

GHAZAL

The intellectual illumination above torment is art of poetry,
Giving mouth to tears when words are absent, is art of
poetry.

I tried to break the chains which have kept me fettered,
Getting released from the clutches of serpent is art of poetry.

My longings remained veiled till I heard the songs of
ecstasy,
Beauty is in her dulcet voice, this ravishment is art of poetry.

I concealed the precious stone in the hem of my cloak,
Bury body sans emotions! Not being maleficent is art of
poetry.

The valley of wilderness has carpet of velvet, pearls in its
breast,
The breeze of jungles mingled with enlightenment—is art of
poetry.

No doubt, I'm a prisoner but this gaol I consider as a garden,
To live in the exile's shank with contentment—is art of
poetry!

Memories of homeland are like the songs of melancholy,
To receive salvation in silence without resentment—is art of
poetry.

In this dark night let the chirping of nightingale lead you to
my hut,

In this gloom, not to let the beloved lament—is art of poetry.

The desires of freedom lie deep in one of the corners of my
heart,

Flying above the borders and not to die in this ailment—is
art of poetry.

Imran Yousuf: He is a Poet/Writer/Columnist/Translator from Kashmir, India. He is currently working as a Columnist and Journalist. He has contributed his poems to various reputed magazines, journals and international anthologies. He has co-authored more than 10 anthologies and has also written a series of articles about the great Sufi Poets of the Kashmir Valley (starting from 14th century), which were published across various newspapers and magazines and are now being compiled into a book (to be launched soon). He is presently engaged in interviewing the current generation of great poets from the Kashmir valley. The articles will also be compiled and given the shape of a book.

DESIGN

In nature or in our lives,
Everything has its own
Design and is
Designed for specific
Purpose, objective.

Design can be
Aesthetic or functional
Or both—according
To the Purpose, objective.

To lead a good life
And enjoy life,
One needs to understand,
Appreciate and be aware of—
Design of nature,
Design of life.

Whatever the Design, plan—

It has to be implemented,

Executed and delivered,

For the purpose, objective,

It was Designed.

Only then, Design comes

To life, becomes dynamic.

Jagadish Prasad: I am writer residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. I am an HR and Media consultant/Resource Person and also a partner in an HR/Talent Resources consultancy company. I have contributed poems to the annual magazine of Chennai Poets Circle, Chennai. I have also contributed prose and poetry to the in-house magazine of IOB (Iobian).

POWER OF MEDITATION

It frees your conscience

Helps you control

Not only your emotions

And thoughts

Even the flow of time

As it helps you

Cultivate the discipline inside

Unleash the power inside

Emancipate the energy inside

Aura of the soul inside,

Happiness does come

From a disciplined life

And relaxed mind

Free of unnecessary thoughts

And stresses

You can lead your life

In the direction you want to

In the phase you want to

In the stage you want to

In the age you want to!

Jayant Singhal: I am a writer residing in Delhi, India. I am an Economics graduate. I have contributed to various anthologies in the past.

NIGHT

Slides under door jambs,
pouring through windows,
painting my room black.

This evening was spent
watching old movies.
Song-and-dance actors
looping through gay,
improbable plots.

All my plates are put away,
cups hanging on hooks.
The towel is still moist.

I blow out cinnamon candles,
wafting the air with spice.
Listening now to heat

sputtering and dogs
barking at winds.

Winter pummels skeletal
trees as the moon's big
yellow eye haunts shadows.

Joan McNerney: Her poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines. Having been published worldwide, she has read at distinguished venues such as The National Arts Club in Gramercy Park, New York and The McNay Institute in San Antonio, Texas. She also recited her poetry at many radio stations in major cities in the US. She has four Best of the Net nominations. Her latest titles are 'The Muse in Miniature' and 'Love Poems for Michael' both available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net.

SUMMER HEAT

did you taste the sweet pure water today
did you hold the vessel, liquid life
free of contamination, free from the touch
the clutch of poetry on the page
dear human, weak and frightened
did you feel that wind of mercy blow
did you find your sanctuary of heroism
that lies within a struggling heart
held captive, now resisting, insisting
on freedom from the slavery
of this devotion to imagined invincibility

is it not possible
my soft smooth friend
to stay above the glistening floor
to rely upon a wetted cloth
to calm the sea which rages within

and look again upon a sun
that rises above a cool terrain
the final gaze from eye to eye
the “oh my god” call, unpredicted
a moment, a whisper, a world possessed
a wish thus granted now kills the rest

Joe Kidd: He is a multi-award-winning songwriter, speech writer, music/film critic, and ordained minister, inducted into Michigan Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2017. He is the recipient of the Michigan Governor’s and the US House of Representatives certificates for work promoting Peace, Social Justice, and Cultural Diversity. He lives in Detroit, Michigan, USA, with partner and author/vocalist Sheila Burke. He has released a CD titled ‘Everybody Has A Purpose’ in 2015, and has published a book of poetry titled ‘The Invisible Waterhole’ in 2020.

BROKEN PROMISE

On the purple threshold of twilight,
the fading moments of the passing day
feel dizzy at the lonely height;
the rugged cliff of eternity
dips its peak into the misty nowhere.
An engulfing darkness embraces all failures,
dream shatters frail reality there.

The melancholy waves of drifting time,
crush and thrash on the perpetual rocks
of wisdom's rigid restfulness;
bursting froth and foam of wakeful sleep
trace moist solace in starry aloofness.

Vision crowds loneliness in despair,
pleasant pains burn and smoulder
at the light's darkest hour.

Wayward night treads on empty streets,
skeletons of white solitude respire.

Helpless illusion grows obscure
in a fascinating longing to touch the truth;
the wandering night
climbs the time's cliff
to wake up the sleeping morn.

Kakoli Ghosh: She is a poet/short story writer from Durgapur, West Bengal, India. She wears many hats—a freelance writer, painter, beauty advisor and jewellery designer and has a keen interest in music and art in general. Apart from contributing to various anthologies, she has also published a poetry book.

‘CHOCOLATEA’

One evening I was wont
To drink something
Other than my daily cup of tea;
But alas, lockdown made
Chocolate, precious...
Saving those bars for the time,
When the Chocolatey mood strikes,
I looked to a different cup,
Of steaming hot beverage...
On a rainy evening...
So rummaging in the kitchen,
What did I find, but,
A pack of unopened
Bournvita!
As the raindrops knocked
On the closed windowpane
An idea rushed through my mind,

I mixed the drink...
One teaspoon of tea
In a cup of boiling water,
One big tablespoon
Of rich brown Bournvita,
I skipped the sugar, of course,
Trusting the taste to manifest on its own...
Ah! How it manifested...
Into a deliciously steaming chocolatey cupful...!
Every sip a treat so tasteful,
I now made it a recipe,
My own recipe of 'Chocolatea'.

Kamar Sultana Sheik: She is a poet, writing mostly on themes of spirituality, mysticism, and Nature with a focus in Sufi Poetry. Her professional career spanning 18 years has been in various organizations and Institutions including the IT sector. She is a self-styled life coach and has currently taken a break to focus on her writing full-time. Sultana has contributed to various anthologies and won several prizes in poetry contests. A green enthusiast, blogger and content writer, Sultana calls herself a wordsmith.

THE MORNING ROSE

In the waning hours of darkness
The mourning doves and blackbirds
begin their day talking to the robins.
They chirp and sing to wake orioles,
cardinals, and mocking birds alike.
While the dew fairies fly to their
rest during the light of day, lovely
colorful roses begin to awaken.
Velveteen petals start to open as the
sun's first rays begin to peek just
over the horizon and the tendrils of
morning mists rise high into the sky.
In the jungle of concrete, wire and
noise, a little yellow rose emerges
from the cracks along the sidewalk.
The rose fights for its very survival;
It bites with a thorny kiss when trying

to grasp it's beauty within our fingers.

And as the sun gently slips below the

horizon we close our eyes to another

day the little rose wraps tightly in her

petals waiting for the next sunrise.

Ken Allan Dronsfield: He is a disabled veteran and prize-winning poet from New Hampshire, now residing in Oklahoma. He has six poetry collections to date: *The Cellaring*; *A Taint of Pity*; *Zephyr's Whisper*; *The Cellaring, Second Edition*; *Sonnets and Scribbles*; and his latest collaborative book, *'Inamorata at Twilight'*. Ken has been nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize and six times for Best of the Net. He was First Prize Winner for the 2018 and 2019 Realistic Poetry International Nature Poetry Contests. He has recently begun producing Creative Content on his YouTube channel and has had wonderful success sharing his poetry with the social media community.

THE HORIZON OF HOPE

Inside the egg of my mom

Dreams I had of freedom

My shell I broke to come home

The sun I saw on the sky dome

Bright smiling and winsome

No longer I felt lonesome

My wings I spread to roam the sky

To test the borders of my liberty

Dawned on me the painful reality

The horizon of faith limits my mobility

My freedom is a bigger egg of humility

An infinite egg never ready to break

Its hard shell of fear and ethics fake

Yonder, they say, is my freedom's brake

Beyond which it is not my take

But I will break my shell of comfort
To escape this fort of stifling support
I won't let the world's limiting horizon
Take away my freedom under the sun

Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur). He is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”, welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea, mountain, books, music and Internet and avoiding complicaters of life like greed, anger, ambition, sentimentalism, sexism, god, rituals, religion and superstitions.

AN OVERFLOW

The horizon is dark, like water smudged charcoal ink.

The lotus blooms in the pond lay, rain drenched and pink.

I sat alone in meditative stillness.

Gazed mesmerised and watched the simplicity of beauty.

Soft petals filled with raindrops and overflowed.

Sometimes dragonflies danced with translucent wings
shining.

I lived on lotus blooms with joy,

The touch of life was pink and fresh.

Death was nowhere in sight.

A gust of wind made the lotus blooms sway,

Blew my hair teasingly in untidy array.

I wondered if it was God's touch, His blessing?

My eyes shut, I listened and heard God's voice in the wind.

Today, I brush-stroke the scene in a hundred different ways.
Strong charcoal outlines filled with heavenly colours,
Smudged lovingly with tenderness.
Such thoughts I never let fade.
They remain with me forever in a mysterious magical way.

Ketaki Mazumdar: I am a poet, a dreamer and an author. I reside in Mumbai, India, but grew up in Kolkata. After an amazing thirty-six years of being an educationist, receiving a National Award from the then President, Dr. Abdul Kalam, I now indulge in my passion for writing poetry and authoring children's books. I have contributed my poems to many poetry sites and authored a boutique book of hundred poems, for private circulation. I continue to learn, be awed by Nature's beauty and mystery, human relationships and the spirituality of life and death.

THE DAY IS DONE

A vulture winging high in the sky
bristles at the faintest smell of rot,
swoops down in swift, hungry arc.
It lives by instinct, its catch of the day.
Then soars, unstrung by care or compunction.

Decibel levels rip open the roof
Betraying more rant than reason
boxed into TV screens on fault lines
that had torn apart seven decades.
A sweeping grab of sound bites for the day,
then retire for the night with pockets lined.
They live by instinct, unstrung by none.

A sudden diet of MSP for kharif
leaves voices irascible, the farmer stuck
where he started his journey.

Good or bad is a whistle blown in the wind.

He too has been manacled in a blind alley.

A minor girl lay torn, eyes frozen in shock,
at the twilight blurred in perversity.

The vulture circles so high up in the sky,
trusts only its instincts to smell the rot.

K.S.Subramanian: I am a poet and short story writer living in Chennai. I have published two volumes of verse through Writers Workshop, Kolkata. I have nine published short stories and also poems in several anthologies. 'Dreams' got the Asian Age prize.

GOD IN MY WOMB

god rumbles in my womb

sometimes with drowning wails

sometimes with wafting whispers

sometimes with prickly
whistles

piercing and rippling through
my veins

my belly, my body enraptured,

aggrandized with sparks, lightnings

waves and peaks of turbulent waters

his voice

his flesh

his spirit

his touch

in volatile omnipresence flooding my
desert lands

with the torment of genesis

struggling to be born,

often aborted through the painful
ephemera of life

yet energized to assume form once
again

knotted in human blood and
bonding

re-inventing itself through the
open spaces of freedom

through the immortal interstices of
my soul

in the holy body of the vital air around
in the completeness of vision and being.

Laksmisree Banerjee: Prof. Dr. Laksmisree Banerjee is an established Poet, Writer, Educationist, Literary Critic, and Classical Vocalist. She is a Senior Fulbright Scholar & Professor (USA) and Founder Vice Chancellor of Kolhan University, India. She has taught and lectured as well as recited her Poetry & Music across the globe. She has Nine published Books of Poetry, with several Academic Books and One Hundred and Twenty Research Publications primarily on diverse areas of Poetry, Culture and Literature. She believes in promoting a Better World through her multi-dimensional work. Dr. Banerjee happens to be the Indian Rashtrapati's Nominee on Boards of Central Universities.

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

you know me by Leroy, you know me by Clee
but you don't know the fight on the inside of me

you know that Bernadette is my mother
you might know that I never had a father, sister or brother

you might know that I dropped out of school
yes I did and I was called a fool

you might know that I used drugs and ran around with a gun
I've been saved by grace and with my old lifestyle I'm done

you might know that Eileen is my wife
indeed she is and that's for life

you might know that we have two sons and a daughter
I believe that they are overcomers and conquerors

I bet you know that I love to write poetry

a gift from God unto me

no eye has seen, no ear has heard

nor did it enter the heart of man what God has in store for
me

it does not matter to whomever you go

that is something you'll never know

Leroy Abrahams: He lives in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. He currently works as a Spot Welder at a Motor Industry Firm. He is a Published Author and enjoys writing poetry. His first book entitled, 'Verse en Inspirasie' was published by Selwyn Milborrow (Milborrow Media). His second book entitled, 'Testimony in Poetry' was published by Bevan Boggenpoel, and the third book entitled, 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection,' which he wrote together with Bevan Boggenpoel, Selwyn Milborrow, and Don Beukes was published by Milborrow Media. His poetry describes himself and how God has transformed his life. He is also a member of a Master Class group of writers as well as Afrikaanse Digters.

CRUMPLED PAPER

Every heartache's gleam seems dim,
compared to the one you have at this moment.
Your grief being cultivated on the fertile ground
of this thin, smooth, pulped wood.

Marked by your pain,
as you contemplate the meaning
of the deep marks upon the page.

Sorrow now found only in distance,
lies, and your own misleading imagination.

Anguish is transitory.
This once bad reality,
you can toss away.
You, feeling the casualness
of this now crumpled paper.

Linda Imbler: When not writing, Linda Imbler is an avid reader, classical guitar player, and a practitioner of both Yoga and Tai Chi. Her poetry collections include five published paperbacks: *Big Questions, Little Sleep, Big Questions, Little Sleep*” second edition (expanded with 66 additional poems), *Lost and Found*, *Red Is The Sunrise*, and *Bus Lights, Travel Sights*. Soma Publishing has published her four e-book collections, *The Sea’s Secret Song*, *Pairings*, a hybrid of short fiction and poetry, and *That Fifth Element*, and *Per Quindecim*. Examples of Linda’s poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com. This writer lives in Wichita, Kansas with her husband, Mike the Luthier, several quite intelligent saltwater fish, and an ever-growing family of gorgeous guitars.

I AM BORN DIFFERENT

Lately I realized I am born different
Because my wilderness listens the melody of wood
My echoes made me awake in night and groove
I often feel the whispering breeze
Binging near me and the sound of dirt
Swinging as the storm
The wild grass in me creates molehill
Flowers bloom in my branches with style
I dream of sunshine
I dream of rhyme
I take shelter in my verse
I console myself from the engraving norms
My wings aspire to flutter
Beyond the cloud
I want to expand the radius of my round
The hurricane of my eyes doesn't rest
My contestant feet aspire to run on the track

In the 4 x 100 relay race

My hips are not acquainted for the extra mile walk

Hence they ache and I cajoled them by soothing ointment

Then I pause

Wait for the tap from the brain cap

Comfort myself with three-letter word

I am born different.

Lopamudra Mishra: She resides in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India. She has completed her graduation in English Hons from Sailabala Women's college, Cuttack and post-graduation in English from Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Her fascination for writing came from her grandfather and father from an early age. Writing for her is the powerful medium of expression. Her poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies. Her works include her very own published books: Rhyme Of Rain; First Rain; Tingling Parables; and Rivulet Of Emotions.

AUTUMN LEAVES

Often I walk the winding path lonely
Treading on a solitary journey
Amidst the thousand fallen autumn leaves
A million stories my mind weaves

My thoughts strewn all along the way I came
Bright colors hues of a fiery flame
Charred, burnt heart I perceive in vain
The autumn chill dances on leaves with pain

Tough to weather the storms within self
Fighting battles raging fires hard on oneself
Grey and gloomy many a times
Not a soul, nobody cares a dime

Nature forces towards new innings
Gradually peel layers of black thinnings

A withered soul emerges hesitantly

Moving on towards love evidently

Only true love can heal wounded heart

Seal with intimacy what fell apart

Let the soul soar in high skies above

Transcends in dreams filled with love

Lubna Ahmed: She is a Certified Master NLP (Neurological Linguistic Programming) Practitioner; NLP Workshop Facilitator and Soft Skills trainer; and Certified Advanced Life Coach. She conducts SuperKoolKids Art Therapy workshops. She resides in Delhi with her family. She has managed to carve a niche for herself in the literary world by her ever so simple 'Love poems'. 'Princess Lubna' is her pen name, her identity as a writer. Her love poems are spiritual and have a Mystical Aura. She has written many poems for National and International Anthologies. She is an avid traveller.

O WOMANIYA

The journey of a Woman is one hell of a rollercoaster ride

Sometimes flamboyant and fleeky

Often ambient as perceived

Ambivalence at par

May there in life lay, significant many scars

Emotional turmoils, hormonal pulls

She goes through many, ups and downs syndrome

Only with one notion, to go on and on

Skeptically right or morales embraced

Predilections and confusions, a daily decorum

Mixed bag feelings, holding tight

Firm and resilient in stark deep nights

Shy and reserve, bubbly yet fierce

Holding herself with grace and elegance

Sometimes she flickers with the twig of negligence

Heart as big as blue skies

God's ultimate creation, having virtues infinite

Smiling and facing every challenges headstrong

Her strength is her never-die spirit and her zeal in on-goings with life!

Madhu Jaiswal: She is a poet, writer, editor and a social worker based in Kolkata, India. She has been published in various national and international anthologies and is regularly featured in popular literary magazines and e-zines. As an executive editor of The Impish Lass Publishing House, Mumbai, she has 5 anthologies to her credit. According to her, hope, belief, and perseverance are the powerful mantras that have the ability to pave our path towards success no matter what. Her writings often revolve around these keywords. She can be contacted at madhuj2203@gmail.com.

SILKY TIGHT COCOON

Emotions set ablaze on rainbow skies,
Love peeped from the smiling eyes,
The sun trying to hide behind the eves.
As words twinkled like smooth pearls on leaves
Weighing them down with abundant love
and they look too frail,
Like the flower pale;
And dainty and delicate like shiny glass,
Carelessly scattered are innumerable dreams on the emerald
grass.
Closed eyes shy, heard the silent velvety steps
Treading into the territory of rosy pink sentiments,
The smile radiant,
The feel, colourful, warm and vibrant,
When two wild hearts get locked inside a silky tight cocoon!

Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar: She is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English). A poetess, blogger, lifeskills counsellor, healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. She is the author of “THE NIGHT JASMINE AND OTHER LOVE POEMS”. She is the winner of ICON OF THE YEAR-LIFESKILLS COUNSELLOR 2015-2016, CREATIVE WRITER OF THE YEAR 2016, and Indian Women Achievers Award 2016 for Creative Writing.

FIND ME

Find me on your teacup

Awaiting your eager lips

Find me on your specs

For you to look at the world through my eyes

Find me on your wheel

To get your firm clasp

Find me on your rear-view mirror

Guiding you on the road

Find me on the clouds

Trailing on the distant horizon

Find me on the wind

That plays on your skin

When you bring down the glass

To exhale your cigarette puffs

Find me on the sweat that trickles down your nape

When you return exhausted from a day's work

Find me in the hot coffee

You drink to relax and think

Of a day spent well only if it was with me!

Madhu Sriwastav: She is an Assistant Professor of English based in Kolkata. She is a poet by passion, also translating and reviewing at leisure. Her debut book of poems is *Trips Climbs Circles*. Her poems have been published widely in National and International Journals and Anthologies.

GIFTS FOR YOU

To the first rays that fall over our windows, I shall braid my hair.

The velvet of our curtain, I shall fold as pages of Neruda's
Twenty love poems.

Placing a perforated jar of memory
throughout calendar, I would smell the spell of April

In your books and school uniforms, I would wrap the zeal of
sun along with the sliced sandwiches of moon

Over the maps of our lives, I shall plant a saga of lilies,
starlings and sparrows whose songs shall pour for us

Respite, rigging our two eyes with cucumber

And a cool tea brewed from leaves of basil and flowers of
chamomile.

Manisha Manhas: Manisha is a Poet residing in Pathankot. She has been published in many national and international journals. Writing poetry is a cathartic experience for her.

DEATH

I had pretermitted

The colour of love

The feeling of love

The presence of love

I had missed

The joy of colours

Those enjoyable feelings

The natural aroma

Of life and love

I didn't enjoy

Nearness in love

Enchanting beauty of nature

Melodious chirpings

Language of innocent smile

Everything was brushed of

For me

I was dead

Emotionally, aesthetically

I was dead,

In true sense

I was dead...

Manjula Asthana Mahanti: I'm a multilingual, published author, translator, and editor. I have six books and one anthology to my credit along with poems, articles, and short stories in several national and international anthologies, e-magazines, etc. I am the recipient of many prestigious awards: Atal Behari Bajpai award; Laureate Rabindranath Tagore Award; Star Ambassador Of World Poetry & Art Award; Best Novelist award; and Samman from Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Literoma Nari Samman, and many more. I have also been chosen amongst 25 women of excellence. Other accolades include Shabd Sadhak; Kavi Pant Smruti Sahitya; and Sahitya Kavya Sagar Samman.

LIFE—A STAGE

all of us are performers
winning some battles
losing some hopes
creating a niche
of beliefs and perspectives

life may become
an empty dream
repose of the soul
time is ephemeral
heart is sinking
is grave its only goal?

there are entries
there are exits
to be less afraid
to be more strong

to gain the whole
new life again

the departing,
imprints on the sand
where stifled dreams
are pounding
'hold on', still, pursue
start at your anew

the peace in silence
streams full of stars
what is life meant to be
to share my heart and soul
to give all I can
to this life, I chose to live

Mehak Varun: She is the author of three books - THE HUMANE QUEST (volume-1, 2 &3), published by Authorspress, New Delhi. She is born and brought up in Jammu and settled in Chandigarh. She has been bestowed with '100 Inspiring Authors of India' award in Kolkata. She has also been honoured with the 'Women Of Influence 2019' award. Recently, she has been awarded Gitesh-Biwa Memorial Award of excellence for her article on woman power 'I Just Need A Chance'.

IN MEMORY OF A DEAR BROTHER

I'm loaded with sadness
That you're not here
Today's your anniversary
The day you left us
For a moment I felt
My life has come to an end
I hold onto our happy memories
What we shared will never die
Giving me strength and comfort
You have walked beside me for a year
And I'm grateful for your company
Many a times I thank God for
I'm blessed to have a brother like you
A good friend and a soulmate
I can turn to on anytime any day
I deeply miss you my dearest brother
May your departed soul Rest In Peace

Merlyn Alexander: I'm a poetess residing in Nagercoil, India. I'm a housewife. My passion includes writing, cooking, and painting. I have contributed to many anthologies. I have published six books in Haiku Poetry and my first anthology of English poems 'SUN KISSED'—Eternal Flames.

BEACH BOYS, DANCE

They dance and drum to their songs.

Boogaloo Boys, Beach Boys, still band members die.

Revolts and rebellion always end in peace, left for the living.

Even the smoking voice of Carl Wilson dies

with a canary inside his cancerous throat called “Darlin.”

Dennis Wilson, hitchhiking, panhandling with the devil
Charles Manson,

toying with heroin, he’s just too much trouble to live.

Check their history of the living and the dead;

you will find them there, minor parts and pieces

musical notes stuck in stone wall cracks,

imbibe alcohol, cocaine.

Names fade, urns toss to sea

dump all lives brief memories,

bingo, no jackpot.

Michael Lee Johnson: He lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era and is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. Mr. Johnson is published in more than 1098 new publications, and his poems have appeared in 40 countries, he edits, publishes ten poetry sites. Michael Lee Johnson has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1; Best of the Net 2016/2; Best of the Net 2017/2; and Best of the Net 2018. Two hundred and seventeen of his poetry videos are now on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>

TYPEWRITER

The keys no longer make any impression on pages,
The ribbon had got torn,
Dust has spread over your body like a finely woven cover,
Have you forgotten my touch?
My fingers?
All those nights of my caressing you?
Your reeds?
Have you forgotten your music?
Your rhyme?

Moinak Dutta: He is a published fiction writer, poet and teacher, with many of his poems and stories published in national and international anthologies, magazines, and dailies. Some of his essays and articles on education and literature and other topics have been published in e-books and e-journals. He has written two full-length fictions: ‘Online@Offline’ and ‘In Search of la Radice’. He was also an editor of a poetry collection titled, ‘Whispering Poeisis’ featuring the work of sixty poets from all over the world, published by Poeisis in 2018. His hobbies include photography, music and watching films.

moinakdutta.wordpress.com

MOTHERLAND

Standing right before you,

Mesmerized!

I almost started to believe that

I forgot you!

Forgot the way you dressed,

The language you spoke,

The colours that you used to enrich

Your culture!

Your history of fighting for your freedom,

Your mother language and your entity.

The glorious journey of your becoming!

Almost forgot the rain, the hail-storms...

And, what was it called again?

The mighty “Kalboishakhi”!

The Rivers, the rich lands,

The yields and the lush green!

The Autumn sky and the “kashphul”!

That red disk on the dark green banner

Reminded me of you again!

I tasted the salty tears rolling down my eyes

And with a beating heart I whispered,

“My golden bengal...

Here I am again.”

Nazia Islam: I am a teacher, currently residing in Dhaka, Bangladesh. As an Early Childhood Educator by profession, my dream is to make a difference in the world by shaping the minds of the future generation. I write out of passion and sometimes, out of whim. I love Nature, books and simplicity, and the sound of rain.

RAREST OF THEM ALL

Mum, my golden pride

A diamond rose,

Gem so angelic

August gift with August fragrance

Humblest, calm and cool

Great, balm so cool

Teacher per excellence

Love, pure and sure.

August, rare, quiet

Faithful, mild and sane

Mum, my beautiful rainbow

God made you in His kind.

Patient, committed, dedicated

Hopeful, soulful, motherly

Real, true, honest, raw

August salute to an August visitor.

In honour of my Mum, Grace Adaku Osuoha, Born in August.

Ngozi Olivia Osuoha: She is a Nigerian poet/writer/thinker/author. She's a graduate of Estate Management with experience in Banking and Broadcasting. She has featured in over sixty international anthologies and has equally published over two hundred and sixty poems in over twenty-five countries. She has authored twenty-three poetry books and some of them are archived in the United States' Library of Congress. She is also a tailor. Some of her poems have been nominated for both the Best Of The Net Awards and Pushcart Prize. Some of her works have also been translated into and published in some languages.

WAY IN THE WOODS

On the way in the woods

I lost a piece of my heart

Whence it came, I know not

What t'was that held it besot

Perhaps with the forsaken leaves

It drifts in breeze gentle and gay

Or has sprung atop a majestic tree

Viewing horizons forbidden to me

Maybe it's glittering with the dew

Rolling over petals of roses pink

Echoing in songs of the skylark

Cascading down a pine bark

What a folly to beckon it

Won't quit, the truant fellow

A couch in the misty mountains
Amongst fizzy flowing fountains

Mundane destinations, destiny mine

O piece of my heart!

Since you have found a beau

I bid you farewell and adieu

Nikhat Mahmood: She is an English Lecturer, a short story writer and an occasional poet, she has translated from Urdu to English and also transliterated in Hindi, a book of poems ‘Zard Patton ki Shawl’ written by a prominent Pakistani poet, several of her stories have been published in various anthologies and magazines. She is currently working on her debut book of short stories, Scent of the Bitter Almonds and a novel, Revived Oaths. She lives in Karachi with her husband and two children.

AMBER OF SPRING...!

Dripped in mist the old path melts,
As if,
Incense sticks are burning for the evening.
Weaving a mystic gossamer of fragrance
And smoke,
Tickles the gypsy mind,
And there the avalanche of thoughts..!

Releasing the turfs of memories,
Caged birds get their wings at last,
Where she falls and flies,
Cascade and its droplets
In their white stainless clade...!

Illuminating the forgotten path,
The glowworm,
In the darkest alley of memory lane,

As the night crawls in the backyard of the village,
There the dawn of the reverie in her world,
Burning all creepy darkness,
She yells, for; the evening is slaved...!

And in that scorched darkness,
She rides in full throttle the chariot of verses
As if to avenge the murder of her life
Woman residing in her blooming like amber of spring...!

Nitusmita Saikia: Nitusmita Saikia, a bilingual writer from Assam, India, is presently working as instructor in National Cadet Corps: the world's largest youth organisation. She is a keen worshiper of literature. She has been writing for magazines like FM, GloMag, Tuck, and for local newspapers in both English and in her mother tongue Assamese. Her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies.

THE ROAD WELL TRAVELLED

A familiar road, One we know so well

The cobblestones rounded and smooth

Each one a face from the past and present

Well-known, well-loved and well-worn

From decades of sharing joys and sorrows

The streetlights on this road are not bright and gold

But rather a comfortable fuzzy pool of yellowed memories

Highlighting the way forward

Making sure we do not get lost in the dark

And wander off the path

Onto a road filled with unknowns.

From a road filled with unknowns

We wander off the path

Lost in the dark

Yet highlighting the way forward

Are the fuzzy yellow circles of light

Casting a golden road to lead us onward
Past the fleeting joys and sorrows
To something more well-known, well-loved, well-worn
Like the faces from our past and present
Those cobblestones, smooth from the passage of time
Ones we know so well, The familiar road.

Nivedita Karthik: I am a poet residing in Gurgaon, working as a medical/scientific editor/reviewer. I am a professional Bharatanatyam dancer, and my poems have been published in Glomag, The Society of Classical Poets, Visual Verse, and The Epoch Times, The Sequoyah Cherokee River Journal, The Ekphrastic Review, Eskimopie Literary Journal, The Poet (Christmas and Childhood issues), and Bamboo Hut Literary Journal. I also read out my poems on poetry livestreams such as the one organized by Rattle Poetry. I have a book of poems forthcoming and am working on the second one. My photographs have been published on the Better Photography website.

A NEW DAY

I stand at the ocean's edge,

The continuous cadence of the sea

Succeeds in stirring up a restless desire

That is akin to an unstoppable force,

It rushes in briefly, then retreats,

Persuading with a soft touch of surf, that

I should leave the safe shore of life

And dive in to the deep waters into the beyond.

The restless ocean, the taunting cries of the seagulls

seem to urge me to emulate their journey across the vast ocean,

To spread my wings and stoke the fire of my curiosity.

They persuade me to spread my wings so I can discover life.

But something holds me back, is it fear of the unknown and unfamiliar?

Must I obey the impulse to listen to the ocean, singing its
sultry siren song

Or walk back to the shore of familiarity and routine?

The need for sameness engulfs me. With a rueful look at the
mighty sea,

I look at the golden sun with its glittering promise of a new
day.

Padmini Rambhatla: I am a poet residing in Chennai, India. I work as a high school English teacher. I have contributed on many occasions to an online poetry forum. I have not yet published any novels but have in mind to do so in the future. I recently learned the art of multitasking as the current situation demanded, as a homemaker, mother, and teacher.

‘How do you think,’
I often wonder.
Oh, just beguile me into
Your heart and soul
Allow me a day’s stroll
Not that I want to forage
Your skeletons or secrets,
Every soul must have ‘em.
All I need to know is
If I can live with them.
Would there be room
For my chagrins, mirth,
Are you deep to hold
Your own before mine?

Then at times
I would rather not know.
It would disappoint me

If I find you small

Or sadden me

If you eschew

My knowing you.

Ah, a poem then

One for the road

And to you.

Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession. Sometimes it helps to know that we are all fighting secret battles and we are not the only ones in pain. I love to observe human relationships and nothing inspires my writing more. Thus, the dominating theme of all my writings are conflicts and triumphs of the same.

FOR HER MERCY

While dusk is little hesitant to welcome the dawn
losing its mystic veil to the baby rays
that lick the silent tears of dew drops,
cutting across the solitude of daybreak
when a westward train whistles and whines,
chilly air greets the day with a mellowed music,
air nimble blended with ‘Ohmkaram’
flowing from the yoga camp in the hospital,
my fleeting abode,
where ailing joints are aerated with oils,
smell of *Dhanvantara* and *Rasonadi* prominent in the air,
birds nested atop the banyan tree,
which has seen three or more generations prior to my great
grandma’s,
birds chatter to rehearse their voices to join the serenade;

I stand in the temple nearby before Devi in a pose of sacrament

with *abhayahastha*, getting bedecked after ‘*jaladhaara*’,
among devotees worshipping for mercy offering small coins,
strikes a revelation, SHE is flooded with so many obligations
as more and more people keep faith in the system
perhaps that is why it takes longer for a cure.

Omkaram—AUM is called Pranava Mantra which controls and governs the whole universe, just as the vital forces in the body control and govern the whole physical system.

Abhayahastha—protection affording hand pose

Jaladhaara—bathing the idol with water, a ritual in Hindu temples

Pankajam: Pankajam, retired from BHEL as DM/Finance, is a bilingual poet and novelist settled at Chennai, India. In addition to several poems, book reviews and articles published in national and international journals, she has twenty-four books to her credit, including thirteen books of poems, a translated poetry collection in French and three fictions in English. Three books on literary criticism, viz., *Femininity Poetic Endeavours*, *History of Contemporary Indian English Poetry-An Appraisal* and *Socio-Cultural Transition in Modern Indian English Writing & Translation* discuss her works in detail. She has won many awards for poems and short stories including Rock Pebbles National Literary Award 2019.

SOWN A POEM IN MY HEART

I had sown a poem in my heart.

Nourished it with affection and love.

The poem germinated and became a sapling.

The young shoot so delicate, so fragile.

The shoot turned into sturdy branches.

Leaves sprouted all around.

Green and freshly adorned

The blossoming poem filled my heart.

It bore fruits of joy and happiness.

The leaves fluttered in my heart.

The colourful fruits formed a rainbow there.

The magic of the poem seed which I had sown in my heart.

Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: Dr.Paramita Mukherjee Mullick is a scientist transformed into a poet. Her poems have been widely published in India and abroad and some have been translated into 39 languages. She is the Founder President of the Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library Mumbai Chapter.

She is like a Rose
How often we have heard
Women seem to enjoy
Poets love this license
Women dare poets to break rules
I often wonder women's choice of mates
They prefer poetic outpourings
Do they?
Do women stand up to plainspeak?
Wondering if they would accept their clothes are gaudy
Or they smell
Gender differences in the use of language
Do they use obscenities?
When they mate do they speak?
Or scream or shout?
Let us see men and women in a
New light today.

Parasuram Ramamoorthi: He is a poet with three published volumes of Poetry: Norwich Musings (2003); Fire Courts Water (2009); and Neem Gita (2011). He is a playwright with twelve plays published and performed. He is an Autism Advocate and Pioneer in the field of Drama for Autism. He is the Chairman of VELVI.

www.velvi.org

A PERMISSION

is never asked for any act we do.

Taking is our rule. If we want or need.

Asking is for idiots, nonsense through
and through. In this full world it is our creed.

All genders take all genders. All complaints
are ignored as irrelevant. Life cheap.
but richer for the taking and no taint
of stealing or wrongness, nor time to weep.

Grab all while you can in this one short life.
All belongs to all. Possession a crime.
Be rude, act savage. Disrespect, knife
those in your way. Fatally is a crime.

We do not beg or borrow. Our delight
is take until taken at last by night.

Paul Brookes: I am a writer residing in Wombwell, England. I work as a shop assistant. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published five poetry books. Forthcoming is another poetry collection called Ghost Holiday (Alien Buddha Press, 2018). My book 'Please Take Change' was published by Cyberwit recently.

A BOATMAN'S SONG

This poem is inspired by a Bengal folk song. Ore ore shundoira nobor maazi.

Oh, dear! It is a beautiful stream, my sailor

Now, sometimes and every day;

I drift across the waters

sailing and rowing away

Oh dear sailor, hear me sing

re re re gama...

O'er the sky flies the moon along with crystal-like stars

Oooo.....oooo...

And on another day oh sailor!

and on another day I will row again,

without knowing no directions and boundaries.

Oh! Dear sailor, it is a beautiful stream

Just like life, just like a dream, my soul wanders

As I row every day, these waters wash away my worries and anxieties of tomorrow...

Oooo ooooo.....

Pooja Suresh: Hello! I am Pooja Suresh, an upcoming Carnatic music vocalist and I perform concerts along with my sister. We sing as vocal duets and I also play the instrument Veena. I started writing as a hobby, and now, take part in various writing prompts and programs. I also recently completed a NANOWRIMO camp setting myself a goal of 10000 words and received an honorable mention for one of my poems on togetherness written for On Fire Cultural Movement. I aspire to write more and read more.

THE GREAT INDIAN KITCHEN

Two worlds,
Where dawn breaks differently,
And the journey till dusk too.

One,
Where serenity pervades,
Dew drops, sunrise and self-care.

Second,
Where the sweaty rustle mounts,
Of grating, chopping and grinding,
Of bustle, rush and a frenzied race of exhaustion,
To a nonexistent destination.

Two sides of a coin,
The other side that has privilege served on a plate,
And the flip side that runs and runs and runs to reach a place
called nothing.

Prabha Prakash: I am a poet based in Kerala. I am a Chartered Accountant and work as Assistant Manager with EY. My first poetry collection ‘Lost Monsoon’ was published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata in 2018. I have been selected for the Reuel International Poetry Prize 2019.

TRUST

My trust was breached
And support mistaken
Heart strongly throbbed
But I was wrong
To unworthy bloke I belonged

Previous time spent together
That would enliven life
Was dumped into oblivion
And you walked away
Strutting with pride.

Reality has dawned on me
It has taught me well
How to take the rough with the smooth
So, no more frail or fragile
But stronger than ever before.

Remember, time spares none
The truth will out soon
Your pride will collapse in agony
Remorse will sweep you away
But it will be too late.

Pragya Sharma: I am a poet based in Delhi, India. I'm an engineering student. I have contributed to a monthly online poetry/prose magazine.

EACH DAY IS A PASSING DAY

Each day is a passing day,

ending with a death certain and sure, and you are the life I
remember always

Whenever you are with me, I come out of my own self,
disrobing clothes of agonies and stand before you with all
my wrinkled skin, like a tree with limbs and trunks fully
naked.

Now that all that's left are only you and me sunlight
spreading wings, how can I explain to thee that we are mere
spaces surrounded by a greater space, a void!

Sound ripples to its own ethereal shore,

lightning enters into its own dark hole,

sight searches for new eyes

missing in action every now and then a beat of the heart!

Who is barking there? I can hear the throbbing heartbeat of
silence amidst terrain of sound waves

I am sitting on the shore, how can I explain thee, that the sea
contains silences far greater than what the naked eyes see!

Prahallad Satpathy: Dr. Prahallad Kumar Satapathy, who hails from Odisha (India), is a bilingual poet writing both in Odia and English. He is a retired Associate Professor of Economics. To his credit, he has four published anthologies in Odia language. His poems are published in many national and international journals. Twice he has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as an honorary member.

Voyage unknown, we set out,
In deep slumber,
Comatose,
Free from the blast of the past,
In limbo,
Unburdened, weightless, so to speak,
Feel so light, a weight off our shoulders,
The cross of our burdens lifted off a while,
Feeling free of the yoke of the daily grind,
That had our noses literally touching the ground...
What a breather!
The welcome calm before the storm
When our books of accounts shall be balanced,
A new sentence read out,
To be reborn again, in another age, another clime,
To try and redeem ourselves..
We come full circle,
And back to Methuselah!

Like actors, to entertain the
string pullers,
Who make us dance to their bidding,
Puppets on a string,
When will the show end?!

Pratima Apte: I am an English Honours graduate of IP College, Delhi. My poems and stories have been published in many e-zones and print anthologies. Words are my world.

AN EVENING PRAYER

The golden sunshine kisses my forehead

A castle of green hope,

A new energy reforms in my cool body

Sprinkling dust of gold

Entering through the tunnel of my heart

Soothing rays keep dancing in delight.

A young couple in the distant sunset

Resting on an ancient bench

Amazed by their own way of thinking

Gathering fond memories of past.

At a little distant,

Splendid saffron hues kiss the western hills,

The fountain of light becomes slowly dim.

At the end of the day

Unknown birds fly to their nest,

I watch the beauty of the pastel horizon
Sitting on the shore line
Viewing the waves of the blue sea.

O, Time

Let me sip from your cup of gold
Spread aroma of blissful hours
Do come again to life with mellow tune
Make the world happy and gay
With your holy cap.

Preety Bora: The poetess, Mrs Preety Bora, started writing from her college days. She hails from the beautiful State of Assam, India and lives in Golaghat with her family. Nature inspires her to write poetry. She writes in both English and in Assamese (her mother tongue). Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines in India and in foreign countries.

THE MUTE BUTTON

I used to daydream and escape to another world.

There was the classroom window which looked on to the nests of birds and squirrels and their antics were always more interesting than the comings and goings of the Mughals in the droning voice of the boring (and bored) history teacher.

There were the last pages of the notebooks where one could doodle caricatures and the names of crushes.

There was the desk where one could inscribe hearts with the divider and compass, to share space with the dozens of students who had sat on them before me.

There were ink puddles that could turn into Rorschach blots.

There were paper cones of peanuts that could be folded out and then folded into origami shapes.

Oh, there were so many ways to silence the teacher without the mute button.

Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: I am a writer residing in Thane, India. I work as freelance copywriter. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published poems in many magazines and poetry anthologies. I was felicitated at Amaravati Poetic Prism 2016 for writing poems in 11 different languages.

IN THE EYES OF THE OLD

In the eyes of the old and aged,
all new and strange with warp
taking a mould out of tune
and out of times, their own course,

where questioning and quarrelling
grow bigger than reasoning
like sediments stuck up in zinc,
a process hard and difficult to remove.

handy wool in dexterous ambience
yet grandma's eyes on synthetic transparent
getting torn pieces lie like abandoned
puppy in porch curled up its future bleak.

grinders and mix advanced yet
tongue and taste the same for all those

who believe in tradition not short course.

She believes not being vociferous.

What about those days of carts

not cars when life dragged by poor

and struggled: now luxury eating

man's conscience and control.

Radhamani Sarma: Radhamani graduated in English Literature from Ethiraj College, Chennai, and did her post-graduation from Venkateswara Univesity, Tirupati. She specialized in W. H. Auden's plays for her doctoral thesis from the University of Madras. She obtained PGDTE CIEFL from Hyderabad. She served and retired as a Professor of English, Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai. She has published four books of poems and one book of short stories. She is widely published and anthologized and subscribes to various journals and websites, and is also a Reviewer and Critic.

Pearlradhe.blogspot.in

pearlradhe.wordpress.com

THINGS WERE NEVER THE SAME AGAIN

No, I'm not a poet only my language turns poetic

when I write of my city *Kashi*. Prose won't do anyway.

It fails when emotions colour thoughts; with thoughts
they burst open the floodgates of mind-reservoir.

Ideas flow on pages; making line-pools in which they

sometimes dance. I know it's madness to live in past: times

and places. I'm mad, I know and I live at only one time

in the past that happens only at one place.

Day dream I would, had I the courage to follow

my heart in dreams of day. There was a time

when I, the king roamed, wandered, strolled as I wished

through ghats and lanes and streets. I could go and sit at a
ghat

(there were no mobiles/pagers then) as long as I felt like,
undisturbed. There was a time when I, the king

sat planning tomorrows; rewriting yesterdays, like Bacon,
took

“all knowledge as my province”. Then it happened: change.

Things were never the same again.

Rajnish Mishra: He is a poet, writer, translator and blogger
born and brought up in Varanasi, India, and now in exile
from his city. His work originates at the points of
intersection between his psyche and his city. He edits PPP
Ezine and writes at:

<https://rajnishmishravns.wordpress.com/>

MY ANGEL TREES

When the world is facing an unprecedented
Heat wave and the glaciers are
Melting in routine fashion, there are the
Trees, the modern angels, who are providing
The protective shield to human beings everywhere;

When the lush green deciduous forests
Are turning into deadly infernos, and
The jungle fire is rapidly destroying the
Flora and fauna, some angel trees are
Standing tall pronouncing their invincibility against all odds;

While the rich nations are not restricting
The emissions of greenhouse gases to the
Detriment of our ecosystem, only the angel
Trees are performing as a sink to absorb
The poisonous gases in their heart's closet,

And are releasing the life sustaining oxygen
For all to survive giving them
A reason to enjoy and smile and
To lead their lives in a healthy fashion;

Green trees are my benefactor, my
Revered angels, who are the source
Of my constant strength and stimulation.

Rakesh Chandra: Mr Rakesh Chandra is a retired civil servant. He is currently pursuing his PhD in Law from Lucknow University. He has two published collections of poems, titled 'Moon is Black' and 'Circle Of Life'. He also has one collection of Hindi poems. His English poems have found place in different poetry journals and newspapers' literary supplements. He also has authored two books on Law.

THE COVID MARTYR

Carrying their world on their backs,
Their universe clasped in their hands,
Tied to the yoke of despair
They trudge to far-away lands.

They are the 'nowhere' people
Worth only a click,
For the political scavengers
Just a statistic.

Hunger and fatigue they can live with
It is the absence of hope that is killing,
The mind and the body they can leash
It is the crunching of the soul that is stifling.

They left their meagre shelters
To stitch together a tomorrow,

Happy with a slice of joy
Ensnared in shards of sorrow.

At the first scent of a crisis
They became the first casualty,
Abandoned like breathing carcasses
By a cruel, callous society.

As some are mauled beneath wheels
Crushed on railway tracks
No one is there to mourn
For these lumps of flesh and bone.

Can each of us become a crusader,
An empathetic warrior
For the Migrant Worker.
For the Covid Martyr

Ramendra Kumar (Ramen): He is an award-winning writer, storyteller and inspirational speaker with 41 books to his name. Ramen's writings have been translated into 30 languages and have found a place in several textbooks and anthologies. He has been invited to literary festivals held in Denmark, Greece, Sharjah, Sri Lanka as well Indian events including the prestigious Jaipur Literature Festival. An Engineer & an MBA, Ramen was serving as the General Manager (Corporate Communications), SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant, when he took Voluntary Retirement to pursue his passion, in August 2020. To know more about the writer, you can visit his website www.ramendra.in and his page on Wikipedia.

LOST METAPHORS

Soft flocculent feelings,
beautiful yet complex
with extended metaphors—
Fly away from the heart's cove:
Butterflies with fragile limbs,
eyes compound and magical,
a whirl of colours—
All create a frantic flutter
deep within me.

I watch the nymphs
beating their petal-wings
until they become
specks on the horizon!
Wide spaces become wider
amid silent sonata of autumn!

Almost frozen in time,
trapped in space,
I inch towards a weird
Organic Automaton!

Ranjana Sharan Sinha: Poet-author-professor Dr. Ranjana Sharan Sinha's poems are part of the postgraduate syllabus, Purnea University. She has been honoured with a number of awards for her contribution to literature and she has received a commendation from President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam for her poem 'Mother Nature'. Her poems, short stories, articles and research papers have been widely published both nationally and internationally. She has authored and published 9 books in different genres and 50 research papers. She is on the Editorial Board of Our Poetry Archive (OPA). She is a Research Supervisor (English) RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur.

HE ROWS THE RAINBOW YACHT

Saw the lovely formation on a twilight sky
and thoughts viewed in mind's fluid eye
rise joyfully into wakeful verse
and into blissful thoughts submerge...

Rainbow is a kaleidoscope of seven colours

Poetry too is pattern to shed contours...

where are its other amorphous hues?

They weave images in rows and rows

crisp of designs and fascinating eerie trends...

Words too work within its sinews and bends

lipping into a feeling that transcends

mundane emotions and elevates as it ascends...

It is the same Power which creates the rainbow yacht
that weaves our web of thought...

Ravi Ranganathan: He is a writer, poet and critic, and a retired banker settled in Chennai. He has to his credit three books of poems entitled ‘Lyrics of Life’ and ‘Blade of Green Grass’ and ‘Of Cloudless Climes’. He revels in writing his thought-provoking short poems called ‘Myku’. He has won many awards for his poetry, including Poiesis Award for excellence (Poiesisonline), Sahitya Gaurav Award (Literati Cosmos Society, Mathura) and Master of Creative Impulse Award (Philosophyque Poetica). He contributes poems and articles regularly to the weekly webzine Literary Vibes and the monthly e-magazine Glomag, and quarterly International magazine Metverse as well as other anthologies.

LEPER

I can't bear to sully you anymore
Pristine, fair, un-caressed
you lie bare, barely fluttering
inviting me to purge, give in to my surges
Unstoppable, I want to pour on you
Fill you till you overflow and leave me little stains
I have visions in calligraphic black
svelte curves and fine tendrils in them
and of you dressed only in my tattoos
but alone with you
my pen will not ejaculate
my fingers retract into stumps
that remember nothing of their past conquests
or the barbs they pressed upon you
till you were black/blue, even green
Helpless I remain, tapping out
some effortless, all too easily erasable strains

Lepered by disuse

when all I want to do is to touch-love you

once again

Reena R: She is a poet/writer from India, currently living in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals. She is the Destiny Poets UK's Poet of the year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015. She won awards at 'World Union Of Poets' poetry competition, 2016 and at 'As You Like It International Poetry Contest'. She won the Reuel International Prize for poetry, 2018.

THE TUNER

as the echoing strings played out,
the tuner halted, amazed
by the bend,
trained ears following familiar trails, phrases
departing time signatures,
anticipating the sweet simplicity of it all,
heeding the ritual of those musicians who came before,
and offering his hands to wash,
water pitcher and cotton towel at hand
like fingers searching sandy beaches,
his eyes closed as if predicting the movement of clouds,
the harmonic celebration of this process,
the coming on anyhow clarity of sound
right out here,
ears to see
eyes to hear

Robert Feldman: Inspired by members of my hometown Paterson's (New Jersey) literary tradition, most notably Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams, I continue to write/publish/present my work (most recently, Hineni; Sunflowers, Sutras, Wheatfields and other ArtPoems), make fire paintings, and play tabla.

<https://sites.google.com/site/robertfeldman23/>

A SPECIAL KEY

There is one special key
That turns a door with
A beginning to your dreams
Like a love match made
In Heaven...it doesn't ask
Where to begin or where
Shall we go from here
It knows the direction!

There is a link...a missing
Piece of the puzzle
That fits perfectly in place
Joining together two souls
In the most exquisite
Connection thus bringing
Us to our destiny and fate!

It guides the two of us
Into the chamber of
Implicit adoration as
We feel the warmth of
A glowing passion begin
A harmony and revelation!

And in each other's eyes
Can see the future as if
It was always there
Waiting to be found
No stumbling blocks
No deterrents...just
The right key that
Opened the door
To our hearts!

Romeo della Valle: Born in a beautiful island named Quisqueya or Hispaniola and from Italian and Spanish parents and coming to America very young with a goal, mainly, to succeed in life and be happy, I am a man with a Vision and a clear mission: “To spread my message of Love and Peace throughout the World, and if my poetry can touch a single soul in the World, then I would gladly die leaving my clear footprints behind!”

DOLLOP

just a bit

just a tiny bit

just a minuscule inconsequential bit...

a dollop really,

something so small no one would ever miss it,

a single flick of the spoon and there we are,

colourful anecdotes all around us—

steam ships down snaking mud rivers,

the latest exploits of darling Miss Capricious,

regaled dead men all over the sprawling painted walls,

the oils looking runny when lit from below;

hours of digestion awaiting each dinner guest,

that clouded way I refuse to chew sleepy bears out of hibernation—

a slight dip at the corner of patterned plates:

a drop, a splodge, a mere bead in the scheme

of schemes;

that fine wicker smoke of tapered candles

in a limited light,

a tuneless piano in the far corner by that mixed brick

fireplace of mantle and hard laugh-less soot.

Ryan Quinn Flanagan: Ryan is a Canadian-born author residing in Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada with his wife and many bears that rifle through his garbage. His work can be found both in print and online in such places as: *Evergreen Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *GloMag*, *The Poet Community*, *Red Fez*, and *The Oklahoma Review*.

STANCE OF A LOST LOVE

Oh dear, if you could listen a moment to me,
I shall sing a stance of love.
Green leaves of maples lost its hue,
To golden fiery orange, as
The rays of autumn sun fall on your cheeks.
Sometimes, the melancholy songs
Played by flute; that you heard in the lonely nights
Could have been weeps of my broken heart.
Oh! dear, if you are near, we could have flee in the air
With colourful wings as we saw in our dreams
That we've woven in the days we spent together
My dear, come, maples are waiting for spring
To welcome you with green.
Rainbow is shining in the skies
To glitter your marvellous eyes.
I'm writing these lines
From the shore of Bosphorus straits

Where Seagulls cries with sorrows and salty tears
They flies up and down, in search of their lost love
My dear, come beside, though the sun is in its
Last sigh to set in the depths of Bosporus.

Saleem Raza (Saleem Kattuchola): He is a freelance writer and painter from Kerala, India, working as a Franchise General Manager. He writes short stories, poems and travelogues in various regional language magazines (Malayalam), periodicals with a pen name as ‘Saleem Kattuchola’, and writes English poems and articles in International magazines and newspapers.

DROPS OF DEW

The dewdrop trickled down the stem

To the tip of the leaf,

Where it clung fast

Neither wanting to stay,

Not wanting to go,

But gravity's hold

Cannot be denied long.

So it rolls and slides down

Into the pool where it joins

A million other drops.

The next day, the same cycle

Begins all over again,

History repeats itself;

Yet another drop drains into the

Limpid pool, creating a hundred ripples.

The circle goes on, and on, and on;
For that, my friend, is how life works.
Never stopping, neverending—
You must learn to keep up like
The drops rolling of the leaves, every morning, into the pool.

Samixa Bajaj: I am a teenager from Guwahati, Assam.
Besides writing, I love reading, dancing, sketching and
music.

SURVIVOR

The sky looked strangely forlorn, bereft of its usual riot of colours

A pale bleached blue, devoid of twinkling stars

And fluffy clouds hanging between the strands of moonlight

Her empty heart ached with love overflowing—a love she could find no place to give to

And it settled as drops of grief in the corners of her turquoise eyes

She looked up at the vast skies—ripped off their usual tangerine hues

And knew, tonight would be another restless one—Sleep, a thousand light years away...

Wandering through the catacombs of time

Between the horrors of a past that seemed just like yesterday

And the hopes of a future that seemed a million light years away,

She was a tired soul, holding on to the last threads of hope

Watching her dreams disappear with the withered fragments
of sleep

Poltergeists of the past dancing back to life

She wasn't here by choice, but then you don't always have
the luxury to choose—she conceded, calmly...

Somehow, she knew, in spite of all the struggles, the tears,
the fears, the vulnerabilities,

There would be light at the end of the tunnel

Just as the sun would rise again tomorrow - a glorious
morning filled with colours and more

And in that, perhaps, she would live a slice of life all over
again...

For she knew deep down, as long as she had love to give,
even as grief spilling from those turquoise depths,

There was still hope, an abundance of possibilities that
would keep her going

For, even though those eyes were sleepless and tired,

They gleamed of a fierce pride of being a survivor...

Samrudhi Dash: I am a poet, novelist, editor and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. I write under the pseudonym 'Inara'. Along with contributions to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date five solo poetry anthologies and three novels and conceptualised and edited four anthologies of different genres. I have recently published my third novel 'Letters from A Stranger - A Life Changing Map', now available as an e-book on Amazon Kindle and figured in the Amazon Bestseller List at Rank 10.

The new moon
absolute silence
of unbroken night
black blanket
clueless darkness
melting mystery
intuition leaves you
to fend for yourself
unknown is also home
to infinite potential
vast possibilities
new moons are monthly silences
that veil untold beginnings
soft resonances
noise of a new moon
never ever betrays
what is to come
an unencumbered curiosity

to explore the unknown
I decided to surrender
to darkness and allow
unpredictable
unexpected to start
embracing the dangerous terrain
new moons demand
vulnerability of the pure soul.

Sangeeta Gupta: She is a Delhi-based bilingual poet, artist and film maker, who has served as an IRS Officer, and retired as Chief Commissioner of Income Tax. She has to her credit 35 solo exhibitions of paintings, 25 published books, and has directed, scripted and shot 17 documentary films. She has 14 anthologies of poems in Hindi and 6 in English to her credit. Song of the Cosmos is her creative biography. Ten of her poetry collections have been translated to various languages. She has been adjudged as highly commended poet of the year 2020 by Destiny Poets International Community of Poets, UK.

LOVE

The day each gun will shoot a rose,
The day each bomb will spread petals,
The day every drop of sweat
of a farmer, a worker will smell like a jasmine,
The day each girl will move like a fearless soul,
The day sorrows will be as soft as feather,
That day come my friend, for you,
I will wait beneath this Gulmohar tree.
We'll sit together for hours
In silence and will read poetry.
But till then let's wait and ask
The Spring to sing
To consecrate our souls
To teach us Love, pure and serene.

Sanhita Sinha: She is a native of Tripura, is a teacher, and a bilingual poet. Her poems have been published in different prestigious national and international anthologies, journals and magazines. Apart from writing, as an elocutionist and as an actor, she is actively engaged in cultural activities. Along with stage, she is a regular artiste of television and radio too.

THE CRESCENT MOON

The moon was a crescent in the star-sprinkled sky.
It seemed to be passing some hopeful message to me,
while the stars looked askance,
wondering at the sweet-somethings
being passed between the two of us.
One star had almost a resentful, sullen air. But why?
I thought it was a man with a slack mouth,
cheeks all flabby and sagging, with a forever nagging wife.
The thought made me smile- after a long, long time.
But why did the smile seem almost like a crime?
Why was it tinged with guilt?

But, I smiled on still, enjoying myself to the hilt
basking in the glow of this self-congratulatory mirth.

I heard a soft, rhythmic, pulsing sound—
nothing alarming, I assured myself—

just my heart pounding—pounding—
hounding out the demons of the night.
Brighter—brighter—brighter grew the night
and the sullen star also smiled,
nodding with full ardour at the crescent moon’s message.

The morn was about to be born.

A new happy age would soon dawn.

Santosh Bakaya: I am the winner of the Reuel Award for my long narrative poem ‘Oh Hark!’; the Setu Award for excellence [2018] for my ‘stellar contribution to world literature’; and the First Keshav Malik Award [2019] for my ‘entire staggeringly prolific and quality conscious oeuvre’. I have been internationally acclaimed for my poetic biography of Mahatma Gandhi, ‘Ballad of Bapu’. An academic, poet, essayist, novelist, biographer, Tedx speaker, my Ted Talk on The Myth of Writer’s block is very popular in creative writing circles. My latest books are ‘Only in Darkness Can You See The Stars’ and two e-books: ‘Vodka by the Volga’ and ‘From Prinsep Ghat to Peer Panjal’ have been very well received.

THE SPRING OF LIFE

The fragrances of flowers

The sighs of the lovers

Walking hand in hand

Looking for a shady tree to stand

Feeding each other grapes straight from the vines

Running through the pastures of the bovines

Filled with jittery excitement

Giving each other entitlement

And such is love, so innocent

But in this modern world it's crooked and bent

The loud ringing laughter

Is the only sign of loving chatter

Sara Bubber: She is a child development professional and a storyteller. She has founded ‘Sara’s Stories’ to help imagination find wings. She loves writing poetry and also writes stories in poetic style. She is a spiritual seeker seeking joys of life through writing, stories and dogs. Her dogs are her favourite people in the world. She loves reading Indian mythology and looking out into Nature.

YESTERDAY

Yesterday has become a memory

Those memories still hurt

When you left me in the rain

Thunderbolt striking

And lightning through the sky

When you think of those moments

Will you still love me?

Your tender touch

On my cheeks

And your loving looks

Through to my heart

Singing melodies

We enjoyed together

Your caresses of my

Dark curly hair

Wiping your sweat away

Your hands encircling

My waist lissome
Holding me close to you
Have you forgotten
All these beautiful moments?
Everything is vivid in my mind
And clear like a
Beautiful dream
Which ended in an embrace
So loving!
Let's bring back
Those feelings
Once more in our life
And walk down the memory lane!

Sarala Balachandran: I reside in Kolkata, West Bengal, with my family. My poems have been published in national and international anthologies. I am a contributing poet for Different Truths. I write free verses.

MANIC ADORATION

O God, I want to be overwhelmed

by something sweeter than
the sour grapes
of harvests past

by a symphony sung
from the lips of a choir
that has cast out all sirens

by a single shot
of adrenaline
not manufactured in a lab

O Lord, I wish to be consumed

by the maddened cry
that heralds laughter
beyond sorrow's edge

by the howling scream
of a righteous wind
come fiercely

by the final plunge
into a vast expanse
promising vistas unparalleled

Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. He guest-edited the 2019, 2020, and 2021 Setu Mag Western Voices editions. Selections of his poetry have been translated into Afrikaans, Albanian, Bengali, Dutch, French, Italian, Kurdish, Malayalam, Persian, Serbian, and Spanish. He hosts a podcast, Songs of Selah, that airs weekly on 17Numa Radio and features interviews with contemporary poets, artists, musicians, and health advocates. More about Outlar's work can be found at 17Numa.com.

LOSS

The world is full of woes, entangled unable to move
Lose your hate now; Gain forever, immeasurable love.

The world is full of greed, a powerful aphrodisiac
Lose your greed now; Gain forever, immeasurable love

The world is full of poverty, of compassion, of pity
Lose your sense of want; Gain forever, immeasurable love

The world is full of hunger, amidst a land of plenty
Lose your blindness to pain; Gain forever, immeasurable
love

The world is full of bigotry, in the name of religion and God
Lose your partisan belief; Gain forever, immeasurable love

The world is full of wars and strife, slaughter of innocent
millions

Believe in yourself, Shankara says and live with peace and
love

Shankar N Kashyap: I am an artist, author, poet and painter residing in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. I am a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon. I have contributed to various anthologies, both National and International. I have also published 8 books so far including Medicolegal, Historical, and Thriller as well as books on Poetry. I was declared “Author of the Year” on consecutive years 2017 and 2018.

TO MY BELOVED FATHER—A TRIBUTE

My father in long years of reverie
Simplicity and generosity not withstanding
A flower in bloom for long
Fineness and sensitivity blooming

My father, who took me along
In every journey that he undertook
The final journey was not to be mine with him
Is this destiny or some presumption of fate

My father, a supremely noble soul that he was
In a manner far beyond the vicissitudes of life
Vagaries of fate truly mesmerising
Impressions of reality drawing
Silently, a maze of emotions

O! my father where art thou?

Have you vanished into oblivion

Or have you melted into the arms of Gods above

Is there life on earth

In this vast conundrum of thoughts and emotions

With you being my guardian angel

In every single thread of my being

Shobha Warriar: I am a poet residing in Chennai. I am a housewife. I have contributed to a few anthologies. I have also published poems and also one collection of a few poems written by me.

I paid my bill in full and still some dues are pending bit by bit, the green of leaves, the blue of skies, the chuckling birds and thrilling rain keep adding to my live-and-kicking charge-sheet tale, there's so much writhing to my life that great raconteurs fail to see, my bonds are silent, smiles and kisses, not the stuff of sane old sagas, pains and misses haunt me still, there's time, I guess, to settle scores and sail my debt to silent shores.

Shreekumar Varma: He is a poet, novelist, and playwright residing in Chennai, India. He has contributed to anthologies and periodicals. He was a Charles Wallace Fellow, and received the R. K. Narayan Award for Creative Writing.

www.shreevarma.com

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shreekumar_Varma

sitting at the edge of a
mountainous terrain
with the clouds floating above
and the waters lapping below

the lunar light in all its splendour
the waving blossoms so very tender

the air whispering in the woods
the trees peeping amidst their hoods
the birds gliding to and fro
distant lights shimmering through

a mesmerising lull
taking care of all that is dull

the galloping mind brought
to a rest

the flute at a distance heard
at its best

a settling feeling down the chest
tranquility and serenity within
my breast

the Bounties of Nature are aplenty
I say

I have resolved to be more Humane
with each passing day!

Sindhu Rana: I am a poet and writer residing in Jalandhar, Punjab (India). I have contributed to various leading newspapers n journals; e-zines and anthologies. I am a script writer and voice-over artist for documentaries. However, reading and writing remain my first love.

LOOK AT LIFE-147

Never worry for what will happen.

Never regret for what has happened.

You might have erred

Who has not, you, I, he or they

Is anyone an exception

Repent and rectify, but don't forget to smile

Live! Life is too short, too precious to be wasted on nothing

Never carry the burden of past, the dreams and fancies of future

Instead of living in a no-man's land

In the dead past and unseen future

Live in the present with your smile and tears

Do not be an alien to yourself

Live the moments as they come

Happiness and sorrow

They are all yours

If you so like, go down the memory lane

Visit the future, but always be in and with the Present with what you see and sense right now.

Past is memory, future is a dream

The present is your reality, something you have to enjoy and endure

You may like it, you may not, but cannot escape it

Better accept and live with it.

Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: He works as Finance Officer in Govt of Odisha. He is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer whose write-ups are published in newspapers and in more than two hundred national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. He writes extensively on life and its intricacies, which are widely acclaimed. His collection of poems and prose are published in his blogs under the heading A LOOK AT LIFE, SOMETHING I LOOK AT, A LOOK, THE RIVULET, THINK ONCE MORE, THE JOURNEY, AU THARE, AU EKA GAPA, SROTASWINI, JATRA, THE JOURNEY etc.

smrutiweb.wordpress.com

smrutitanuja.blogspot.com

ALONE NOT ALONE

Save me Lord
from this temptation
from this whispering snake
from this fallen angel
dark waters fill my soul
another stone tied around my neck
dragging me down
these old wings too weak
I have fallen again
fallen for the only beauty
the only flower
in the garden forbidden
I thirst
for her nectar
for one sip from her well
paradise for thirty pieces of silver
hell

I must search my trampled soul:

one day

maybe

just one sip from her well

Stefan Bohdan: He lives in Orlando, Florida, USA. He is retired from the architectural/engineering/construction world. He now spends his time writing poems and novels. His English poems have been published in multiple books, anthologies, journals, Ezines and translated into various languages. He is internationally published and has collaborated with poets, translators and artists from around the world. He is also the founder of Third Eye Butterfly Press.

LAST BUFFALO ROAM

Great heroes who stampede and bleed.

Killed for gold, oil, timber and greed.

Great craftsmen from clay, grasses, and reeds.

Trying to protect their home.

Holding out for the last Buffalo roam.

Great cultures will never die.

The chief still has his war cry.

SUNSETS BEFORE MY EYES

You give me sunsets before my eyes.

You've made my heart pound with sighs.

You never let anyone put me down.

We communicate when you're around.

I will ever be a part of you.

You have made our vows be true.

SCOUTED PRAY

A flock of starlings roosting in a barren tree.

The hawk circling a signal to flee.

Stephen Goetz: I am a poet from Lincoln City, Oregon, USA. I am still perfecting my writing skills on published poems online. I am a regular contributor to GloMag compiled by Glory Sasikala, publisher, India. I have received poetry awards from Motivational Strips Poetry Group.

You lass with sass

You ask me to tell you a story

Well this is how it goes

In our hoary past

Once upon a time

there were many princesses of every hue

doe-eyed with long black tresses like silken tassels

buxom and beauteous trapped with heavy golden ornaments

all they had to look forward to was to be uplifted by a
shining knight in valorous armour

devoid of initiative spunk or chutzpah

waiting for redemption and deliverance

Why are you are dozing off sassy lass

Does it not hold your interest

You have got to listen what happens in the present

Came the ignored maids-in-waiting full of guts and
intelligence

They carved a niche for themselves

storming into hitherto unknown bastions

striding striving forward shining in their own glory

stripping off the shield of glamour from those princely
knights

robbed off their characters' halo

The story writers were found floundering

Ahh ! Now you are interestingly wide-eyed

Then shall we allow the sleeping lions and tigers to sleep

In fact let everyone be asleep

except for the bats who are flying high instead of hanging
upside down

and the owls who are looking stylishly wise.

Sudeshna Mukherjee: Sudeshna Mukherjee's poems deal with varied human nature. A keen observer, she chronicles the happenings around her and writes with a tinge of humour. 'Meanderings of the Mind' and 'Mélange' are her published collections of poems. She loves 'words' and loves to play with them.

YET TO FIND

Years have weighed upon me
or I have used years
yet to find...
a small stir even brews a storm
and I become a loud shriek

Memory of previous seasons
kisses me gently
as quiet distills into life's arena
leaving me nostalgic
some speechless seconds
then I steel myself
like the dusky horizon just before rains
and gulp down dark secrets

Quilted emotions await to embrace
deep breath and heart's murmur

ruminations of profound sorrow
find redressal in the yards of jilted love
stormy seas and troubled waters
fail to recede
even though, I deftly hold on to oar

Creaks of my aging carcass
make me realise
I have lived enough life
time ripe now to take leave
like a quaint hush...a subdued pause
let me embrace travesties of life
and settle with the dust.

Sujata Dash: She is a retired banker. She is passionate about poetry and music. Nature remains her first love and she is enamoured by its beauty and subtleties. She is a regular contributor to anthologies published both nationwide and worldwide. Till now, she has one published anthology of poems: *More Than Mere* (published by Authorspress) to her credit.

SPECIAL MOMENTS GIFTED BY MY FATHER

Then I was in 5th standard only

Mom used to teach me in the evening,

Whenever I misspelt any word

She caned badly out of extreme wrath.

One day my father came home earlier

And noticing the scene and got annoyed with her.

Also applied ointment over the wound with care.

He did all kinds of fasts like ‘Janmastami’, ‘Shiva Chaturdashi’ and all,

I too had kept the same with him from the very childhood despite his prohibition.

After all day’s starvation both father and daughter took refreshments together,

The moments still I cherish and will forever.

When I was doing my Masters, he told me that

Whenever he would be no more,

And if I feel any kind of uneasiness or get upset
I should remember him heart and soul
And all my troubles would disappear soon.

I still share those Unforgettable moments with my princess
And feel blessed he gifted me such a wonderful childhood.

Sujata Paul: She is a trilingual poetess. By profession she is a teacher but writing is her passion. She is a Founder of Creative Tripura. She conducts a Talk Show named Creativity is Intelligence Sp. She has published three poetry books. Her work has been featured in several anthologies. She has been conferred Sahitya Academy Award, 2020, by Gujarat Sahitya Academy; the Literoma Nari Samman Award, 2020; Most Influential Women Award, 2020 by The Spirit Mania; and the Literary Excellence Award by Suryodaya Literary Foundation, 2020. She has been conferred ‘Shakespeare of Medal’ in 2021 by Motivational Strips and also featured in NBM Bangla TV, Bangladesh.

MADE FOR EACH OTHER

What is compatibility

What is good match or mismatch

Relation is a feeling of trust and faith

Not a field of cricket match.

It's not about the figure

Not about the face,

Where heart unable to connect each other

Love fades its grace.

A shoulder to lean on

A hand to wipe tears,

A smile to make you smile

Tight bondage of two cozy arms,

Where soul intimacy is the ultimate charm.

What is made for each other
If one doesn't care for
The happiness of other,
There love is an unfair affair.

Looks or posture whatever
True love has an unusual gesture.
True love stays with you
In every condition,
In any odd situation
And forever and ever.

Sumana Bhattacharjee: She is a bilingual poetry writer from India, born and brought up in Kolkata in a family of teachers. She has keen interest in music, poetry and drama and she loves every form of fine arts. She has done her Master's degree in English Literature and Hons in Bengali literature. She is a published poet and her poems have been published in more than twenty national and international anthologies, magazines and blogs. She is the founder of an online poetry group and a member of World Union Of poets. She is very passionate about poetry and she thinks poetry is the best way to express your thought.

YELLOW LEAVES

Before the yellow leaf falls,

does it know?

Does it bid goodbye?

Does the tree cry

As it watches its leaves

pirouetting in the breeze,

falling near, or flying far?

Have they learnt about life—

Its harsh cycle of death

and regeneration?

Tall trees' colourful memory rings

stained spine record lost springs—

Must know the moment's precious...

Those tender green shoots,

lovingly sprouted,

Are there to adore

only for an interlude.

The wind knows,
caresses the new-borns,
Sings lullabies,
tugs teasingly, then
stalwartly shoulders
their final flight.

The leaves perform,
Prepare food
To flower and fruit,
Until they drop.

Yellowed leaf,
as you let go,
do you see the forlorn bough,
or tender new greens,
and know
it's just a passing season?

Sumita Dutta Shoam: I am a poet and author residing in Chennai, India. I work as an editor, designer and publisher. I have contributed to various online and print anthologies. I have also published a novel. My publishing house, Adisakrit, has published a number of both fiction and nonfiction books.

PLEA

Don't dislodge me
From your arms, dear,
Like the falling leaves
I will slip into the grave
Or the desolate pit of despair.

Don't dislocate me
From your embrace
Like the faded petals
I will perish on the dew drops
Pinning among the thorny bushes of desire.

Weave me into your branches
Braid me inside your grove
Drench my limbs
With the liquid honey of your lips,
Caress my arms
With the sunbeams of your touch,
Reach for the lotus inside me
With patterns of your love,
I will become a luminous rainbow
A cache of emerald, a posse of sapphire!

Sumitra Mishra: Major Dr. Mrs. Sumitra Mishra is a Professor of English who retired as the Principal, Government Women's College, Sambalpur, Odisha. She has also worked as an Associate N.C.C. Officer in the Girls' Wing. She is a life member of the Odisha Lekhika Sansad and the Sub-editor of a magazine titled 'Smruti Santwona'. Her poems and short stories in both English and Odia are widely published in literary magazines and e-zines. She has twelve published books to her credit and four collections of poetry in English. She lives in Bhubaneswar with her family.

RELEASE

How do I escape myself?
I tried stripping out of my skin
Letting festering wounds slough
Lanced many an abscess
Letting pus flow, the blood loss
Shriveled my veins,
Letting my heart harden
they said I had a massive blockage
letting the right coronary artery rest
they stented it
letting it widen, pulsate, live again
trapped in the same rut again.

Why only the right artery?
The shadow cells stank, regrets
Ravenously starved
A void aching to be fertilized

The seed of belongingness
failed to sprout in barren land.

Oh! For a strip of freedom
sans boundaries, sans obstacles,
wander aimlessly
no concepts of right or wrong
where I free myself of myself!

Sunil Kaushal: I am a poet-writer residing in Pune, India. I am a retired gynecologist now working as a writer having contributed to more than 25 National and International anthologies. I have published my memoirs recently. Besides several other awards over the years, I was awarded the Literoma Women Achiever's Award, 2019. I have received the the Nissim award for 'exquisite prose' from TSL in 2020.

CONTACTS

The first rains bring relief and cover the dry, dusty
Surfaces with a rich dash of green

Re-vitalize the shrunken trees and parched grass/flowers
With its gentle contact with the exhausted earth,

This ethereal being with its cold fingers

And fresh breath

Much extolled in art and music and songs, the

Demi-god, living, the dark-faced

Monsoon magical, that revives old tissues

And memories buried in stuffy vaults

Deep down.

The tired migrant seeks out some old friends

In the unlocked rooms, down the dusty corridors

Of time and space, vacant or occupied, longing for
The familiar tone, smile and greetings

And, most important of all,
that reinvigorating touch, presence,
in a forgetful city of dead lilacs!

Sunil Sharma: Sunil Sharma, a writer-freelance-academic from Mumbai, India, has published 22 books, solo and joint. He edits Setu.

<http://www.setumag.com/p/setu-home.html>

<http://www.drsunilsharma.blogspot.in/>

THE SEARCH

I search for her in cities, forests and glades

In the houses that she lived in

I search for that naughty glint in her eyes

her red lipstick-ed lips

her long, dainty fingers

her frizzy hair which she tamed into a chignon

a shy rose or a string of dewy jasmine tucked into it

I search for her...

I search for her kindness

her circle of love

her gentle rebuke

the times we sang out of tune

fumbling with the lyrics

I search...

I search and search
and find her at last—
in my heart
growing like the branches of an old tree
she resides in me

Sunita Singh: She is a bi-lingual poet and writer, writing in English and Hindi. Her poems feature in Indian and International Anthologies and e-magazines. Many of her poems have won awards on on-line forums like Kaafiya, Poetry Planet, The Significant League, etc. A few of her Hindi poems have also been turned into lyrics for private albums. She is an active member of Katha Kathan, a forum for reviving Indian languages. She lives in Delhi and is fond of travelling, music, and reading. She finds inspiration from Nature.

VOICES

Sounds often escape me now

Voices fill up the void instead

The inner voice calls

Repeat, rewind, replay...

Almost in that sequence

Mother's stern hailing

To hasten my academic progress

Father beckoning for a browse

In his recently acquired award-winning novel

Grandmom for a quick bite

Into her arduous preparation of coconut savoury

The deafening gong of the giant bell

Summoning assembly for morning prayers

The disharmonious chorus during music lessons

Miss Kapoor's deft fingers on the grand piano

Grandpa's quivering voice

Rendering a devotional Tagore number

The vendors' calls

In those forlorn afternoons

And drowning all

The voice of Silence

So full...so complete...

Supatra Sen: Dr. Supatra Sen, Associate Professor, is a veteran academician, teaching and researching in the fields of Botany and Environment. She has won the 'Environmentalism of the Year' and 'Best Faculty of the Year' awards, besides two National Awards for her literary endeavours. Her international books, papers and reviews are chiefly in her professional field. She has edited several UGC-funded ISBN volumes to her credit. Of late, her poetries have been published in several journals. Having edited her College academic journal 'Musings' and calligraphic magazine 'Ujaan' earlier, she is also the founder and Chief Editor of an ISSN peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary academic journal 'Harvest' since 2016.

STALED WITHIN OBLIVION...

Septon Couplet 2/2/2/2/2/2/2/2-9

born to live in the mist, lost and forgotten
left behind when every moment is forsaken
cast the shadow for those eyes are forbidden
shuttered into pieces, all unseen and hidden
underneath in the coldness, remained stale
till time to revive each breath to tell the tale
no life within, frozen in the breeze of time
in shivering cold, once more clock will chime
to linger among the green leaves rustling
dancing with soft sounds of winds whistling
when it will finally find the strayed rhymes
buried in the ground, was a shallow grime
staled within oblivion took shelter to rest
exist pale and frail just to redeem the best
will be here in a world no one will know
with memories of time as the winds blow

staled among the still waters, a burdened heart
within the oblivion time never spared for a start

Suzette Portes San Jose: She was born and raised in Cebu City, Philippines. She was born with a passion for writing and living in her art forms. She has now joined 23 book anthologies internationally. She is also a recipient of multiple awards for her ART works and Literary works. She also founded her own Poetry Group of artists and poets writing Ekphrastic Poetry. She is also a founder of Artist Kids charity project, all for free. She is also a Publisher and is now publishing her own book along with other book anthologies of her group.

THE DREAM

You want that dream, the dream in a dream

But, how to get there?

The dream seems to be out of reach.

In late night hours

You reach for the moonlight

You try so hard, again and again, but lose sight of the goal

You struggle, you climbed—

and you fall down in the abyss.

You crawl and scream and want to give up.

Where is the dream you are chasing?

Maybe it's time to stop dreaming and start living?

Time to put your feet on the ground

Smell some flowers, hug the old oak tree...

Hug it like an old friend

The oak that knows all your dreams

Svanhild Løvli: She is a bilingual poetess, currently living in Gjøvik, NORWAY. She is an avid photographer and loves to draw. She is concerned with Nature conservation, women's rights and family life. She regularly publishes in GloMag. She has contributed in 'Voice of Aspirants', Poetry Planet, and Galaktika Poetike Atunis Magazine. She is admin in Global Literary Society. She is a member of several poetry groups.

FOR THE FLAG OF TOMORROW

For the flag of tomorrow there is no forbidden path
If that declares triumph at the end of the voyage.
It may come after infinite suffering or after a bloodbath,
It may come after extreme violence or dictators' outrage.

The deepest secret I've learned from the pages of history:
That each idea is nothing but a large lump of rotten meat,
If cooked by the famous chef it smells and tests sweetly;
Otherwise, thrown away at the dustbin with a lump of peat.

The flag won't declare triumph if it collects heavy moistness
Of ideas and ideals easily available in atmosphere around it.
It's a strange world; it becomes strong and gains opulence
If someone can place it from a blind ally to a wide street.

For the flag of tomorrow there is no forbidden zone,
If flatters proudly behind anyone who can occupy his throne.

Swapan Kumar Rakshit: He is an Indian poet who lives in Bankura, West Bengal. He teaches physics for his professional needs. However, he prefers to write poems, especially sonnets. He wants to be acquainted with the universal mind through poetry.

WOMANIYA

Every day is her day

She is the queen of all she surveys.

She doesn't need an introduction,

She is the one who makes your day!

She goes about her life quietly

She performs each task dutifully

She doesn't need a dedication

All she wants is just a li'l appreciation.

Yes, she has evolved with time

Yes, she no longer believes in quarantine

Yes, she has become more sure-footed

But at heart she's still a mother and wife.

She's the friend you can confide in

She's the sister you can believe in

She's the grandma who loves unconditionally
She's the culmination of everything divine.

Her whole life is a celebration
Which can't be done in just a day
'Coz every day is her day
She's the queen of all she surveys.

Uma Agarwal Bajaj: I am a Company Secretary by qualification and a homemaker by choice. Born and brought up in the City of Joy, I now happily live in the Gateway to the North East (Guwahati). Been married for the last 20 years I was so busy with my family life that I never thought I could express my thoughts on paper, a discovery I chanced upon about 5 years back. I write in both English and Hindi. I am now trying to set up a small venture too. God willing!!

REBIRTH

On my walk through winding,
unfrequented lanes,
the air is still,
the sun not wholly ineffectual,
my path firm

A meagre snowfall makes lace of the land;
birds in their branches keeps mute vigil
Nature,
half in mourning,
wears a grey mantle
and sighs in the trees

The sun will soon become an early riser
And grey skies will go into storage
A living silence will issue a mumble
from hedge and shrub

From high in the trees sociable conversation of song,
will fill this very air,
with the humming of rebirth

I focus on the process of psychological awakening with emphasis on perceptions of spiritual growth and the realisation that rebirthing is required in a severely controlled society.

VaL Smit: VaL Smit is a South African artist and poet based in Cape Town. She writes ekphrastic poetry per artwork created and uses various media in portraying images that she feels fitting to deliver the message of the words she pens down. She focuses on the inner turmoil experienced by our disconnectedness from Nature and each other. Her work has been published in various online journals including GloMag India, The Chachalaca Review, The West Review, The Raconteur Review, Literary Garland and Valiant Scribe.

WHEN IT'S TIME

Today is tomorrow's yesterday

In queue

Before the Sun drops into the sea

I have spent many an evening

By the western horizon

Of a busy city

Where humanity honked behind steering wheel

Convinced as it was, of its indispensability.

The golden ball

Goes down

Like accomplished swimmer

Without making a splash

Vandana Kumar: She is a French teacher in New Delhi. Her passions include playing the piano and quizzing. She is an educator and translator with over 20 years of experience. She has been published in international journals. She was also shortlisted in a competition organized by the ‘Woman Inc.—TWIBB Sakhi Annual Poetry Awards 2019. More recently, a poem of hers featured in the prestigious ‘Madras Courier’. She also translated Dr. Ampat Koshy’s English Poem into French, which appeared in the Fasihi magazine. Her articles on cinema have recently been published in Just-Cinema.com, The Daily Eye, Free Press Journal, etc.

OTHERS?

I scratched my head, blinked my eyes,
Read through the form again,
Not knowing which box to choose
And mark it with a tick,
For, I am a transgender,
And though society has put me, and my like, in a box,
There were no boxes for us in the form—
Male, Female, Others, Prefer not to mention!
“Male” I am not entirely,
Though at birth thus I was attributed,
(What would my ignorant parents know?),
Nor am I wholly “Female”,
Though womanly attire is what I wear,
“Others” I do not understand,
With its marginalised, step motherly bearing,
As if an outcast,
And qualms I have not any

To mention my gender,
For, though the world chooses to deny
I know I was born perfect—
A transgender.

Vidya Shankar: A widely published and award-winning poet, writer, blogger, motivational speaker, a “book” with the Human Library, a member of India Poetry Circle, and an English teacher, I reside in Chennai, India. I have been on the editorial of four publications, and have published two books of poems, one, a coffee table book in collaboration with my photographer husband, and the other, to create awareness about mental health. I am the chief admin of the Facebook group Kavya-Adisakrit and one of the editors of Kavya-Adisakrit, an imprint of Adisakrit Publishing House. I find meaning to my life through poetry, yoga and mandalas.

KANCHIPURAM

Some have travelled miles to see
You, wrapped in nine yards of pure
Unstitched poetry—

Bear witness to the sun
Pay homage to the shrines you wear—
And touch the skin of silken legends

To hear the swish of your thoughts
As you walk through history—
The fabric of our lives

Hand-woven, with the thread,
Dyed and dried,
Of others' heartbroken narratives

Vijay Nair: I retired as an Associate Professor of English and I was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016. I was the ‘Critic of the Year’ in 2016, 2017 & 2018 at Destiny Poets, UK and was also adjudged the ‘Poet of the Year’ in 2018 by the same poetry group. Three of my poems have been included in the PG syllabus of BBMK University, Dhanbad.

VIGIL OUTSIDE THE ICU

Vigil outside the ICU

Somewhere celebrations are on

To ring in the new year

Time here is a thick goo

Of sleeplessness and heartache

We split the strands into nanoseconds

Into infinity

Weaving unbelievable stories of recoupment

We sit like the Bamian Buddhas

Waiting for Time's grenades to blast us

Into smithereens

Vineetha Mekkoth: She is a poet, writer, translator and editor from Calicut, Kerala. She works as State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. She has translated for the Kerala Sahitya Academy and has also contributed articles for the Malayalam Literary Survey, a quarterly brought out by the academy. She has published poems and short stories in various anthologies. She is co-editor of two anthologies. Her debut poetry collection ‘Ashtavakra and Other Poems’ published in August 2017 is available on Amazon.

FLOOD OF SILENCE

She took away the plates as he finished his food and began washing it in the sink. He retired to his room and saw his daughter lying on the bed. His daughter looked calm and asleep, but the way her mother had said—sleeping with a hidden disdain. He waited for the sound of water falling in the background to stop. He wanted to ask his wife to hold on for some time, but he knew she would ask him to pardon her for a moment as if she would finish it all in a minute. Though he knew she would continue doing that for longer, precisely the way she dealt with her life. He watched his daughter as she slept and fluttered in her dreams. Suddenly, the sound of the water dripping from the tap subsided, and there was a groping silence. It's not the silence he likes. It's not the silence he prefers for reading. This utter silence pulls something within him as the whirling water does. It gets inside his mind and leaves him numb. There's this discomfort and a heavy heartbeat it brings along. It's the same silence he had felt when he had gone to the riverbank in the late night when it was flooded. The river had stretched itself wider, breaking its shores on either side, and the steps where he used to walk before were underwater. There was nothing around except the water that kept flowing as if disregarding his company. And there was this frightening stretch of silence. Silence enveloped him, gradually tightening its grip. It enslaved him and didn't let him go

away even when he felt choked. Such was the silence he felt—the one of death and how he described it to himself.

Vivek Nath Mishra: My short stories have appeared in The Hindu, Queen mob's Teahouse, Muse India, The Criterion Journal, Cafe Dissensus, Setu, Spillwords, Literary Yard, Indian Ruminations, Prachya Review, Indus women writing, and on many other platforms. Some of my stories are forthcoming in Indian Literature, Adelaide literary magazine and The Punch Magazine. My debut book is 'Birdsongs of Love and Despair'.

A SWEAR

Never again in the days and nights to follow
Will I cry over you with a heart too hollow
Tears shed in silence, with the world watching
Will never make the banks of Thames overflow
Carry your stony heart to some place quiet
Hearts that cannot be moved with love pristine
Can they be moved with tears not feigned?
The tears serve only to tear unnoticed
My precious jewel pining for you
This unprecedented indifference my love
Had but been for me ever due.

Zulfiqar Parvez: He is the Head of Academic Affairs cum English Language Teacher at Tanzimul Ummah International Tahfiz School, Dhaka. He has done his Honours and Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Rajshahi.

